May bliss be in your heart
at the break of day of the New Year

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

# GMA backs GI's transfer

## Palace says President has power

By Christine O. Avendaño and Leila B. Salaverria

DISMISSING PRESS calls for President Macapagal-Arroyo to be impeached, Malacañang yesterday backed the midnight transfer to US custody of an American Marine convicted of raping a Filipino woman.

"Yes, you can say that, we support it," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told the Inquirer when asked whether the Palace and Mr. Arroyo supported the decision by the interior department to hand over Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith or the US Embassy despite the absence of a specific court order.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez denied the handover came about

LET THERE BE LIGHT, NOT A BIG BANG

Under a glowing tree, cousins Bryant, Irvin, Kyla Maria and Aaron along Roxas Boulevard welcome 2007 with gentle sparklers that light up their faces as bright as the hopes that the New Year brings. It is the safe way, the only way to greet many more new years to come

## Saddam buried in hometown

BAGHDAD—THOUSANDS OF Iraqis flocked to Saddam Hussein's hometown yesterday, where the deposed leader was buried in a religious compound 24 hours after his hanging.

Saddam was buried shortly before dawn in the center of Urja, the town of his birth, this news person for the newsmen said. Tikrit, 130 kilometers north of Baghdad, according to the Salahuddin Province governor.

Within Iraq and across the world, the answers were also with pictures of Saddam in death, a frame on his chest, his neck elongated and twisted impossibly to the right—grisly proof that the man who had tormented and

SADDAM, A4

## Economic gains branded an illusion

THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY made some impressive gains in 2006, culminating in the early repayment of debt but the benefits have yet to trickle down to ordinary people, many of whom still go hungry.

Analysts say that much of what has been achieved has been done for the benefit of international creditors and the credit-rating agencies, with little progress made on health, education and public infrastructure.

"The economic picture is an illusion," they believe, an economist with the University of

ECONOMY, A2

## 2007 Year of the Fire Boar: Clash of fire, water

By Abigail L. Ho

THE HOME SUPERVISOR AT THE LAUREST and most dogged of the 12 creatures in the Chinese zodiac, is fiery chart ended up last in the rotating cycle of animal signs.

But that doesn't mean that this coming Year of the Fire Boar, which starts on Feb. 18, will be an unremarkable one.

2007 TIMES, A3

SAFE TERRAIN

## Bicol GK homes withstood 'Reming'

By Voir Contreras

OF THE CHARACTERS THAT THE killer typhoon "Reming" visited on Bicol, its deaths and injuries were reported from the 46 municipalities that the General Ruling had set up around the region.

According to GK executive director Antonio Meloto, this was because the panel-colored GK neighborhoods stood on safe, scientifically chosen terrain despite the awareness themselves being built at low cost and in part by volunteer labor.

Looking back at a year of major calamities, the founder of one of the country's most successful housing programs for the poor said the events of 2006 may have demonstrated one simple point: "Give Filipinos a proper home and they will cease to be potential activists."

Reming unleashed mudslides, buried entire villages, and permanently scarred the map of Bicol. It left 739 people dead, 3,390

BICOL GK HOMES, A4

IT WAS THE WORST OF TIMES.

## IMAGES 2006

By Photos Perla
Photo Editor Boy Cabrido

IT WAS THE YEAR OF OUR GREAT DIVIDE OVER CHANGE and change and the military coup that never was, followed by the rounding up of the usual suspects. The pot-throwing Left and Right mouthed from the mayor-mass, increasingly spectacular killings of Leftist leaders and critical journalists.

And yet, we pulled together as one people as every disaster that struck the country one after the other. But the good times, few as they were, celebrated national unity as well as in Pacquiao's spectacular victories.

As planned, the soaring images of raging debates, discord and discontent gave way to an economic upturned, sober reflection and high hopes for 2007. Only makes sense. Because we are down there.

There's no other way to go but up.

Continued pages A7 & A16

A NATION DIVIDED

A PRESIDENCY ON THE ROPES

THE BEST OF TIMES

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 2007

**WEATHER FORECAST**

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao: All provinces cloudy most of the day with scattered thunderstorms and heavy rains in the afternoon and evening. Metro Manila: Partly cloudy to cloudy most of the day with scattered thunderstorms in the afternoon and evening. Light to moderate winds from the southwest. Coastal waters: Moderate to rough seas with scattered thunderstorms.

Second FRONTPAGE

# Customs chief wants judge fired

By Lala B. Salaverria

FOR BLOCKING THE TRANSFER OF A CUSTOMS official to a new office, an Olongapo City judge's own job may be on the line after the Bureau of Customs asked the Supreme Court to dismiss the judge from the service.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales has accused Olongapo Regional Trial Court Judge Ramon Caguioa of gross ignorance of the law, manifest partiality and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service in an administrative complaint filed before the Supreme Court, according to the SOC.

The complaint stemmed from Caguioa's issuance of a writ of preliminary injunction stopping Morales from implementing his own 2006 order reassigning Peri of Subic district collector Andres Salvacion Jr. to the Port of Cagayan de Oro and replacing him with Marietta Guinaranza.

Morales said he had asked the Supreme Court to dismiss Caguioa from the service, which would result in his losing his retirement benefits and not allow his reemployment in the government.

According to Morales, Caguioa should not have entertained Salvacion's petition to stop the latter's transfer because this had become moot with Salvacion's assumption of office.

Morales also said the issuance of the injunction was, in effect, a prejudgment of the case and a virtual acceptance of Salvacion's contention that his reassignment was improper.

He also said the parties involved had yet to present evidence to support their arguments.

Caguioa's complaint should have first been brought to the Civil Service Commission, which has exclusive jurisdiction over the transfer, reassignment and promotion of personnel, Morales said.

Morales also said Caguioa had no legal authority to interfere with the commissioner's prerogative under the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines to transfer or reassign customs personnel.

He said earlier Supreme Court rulings state that government employees whose appointments are not status-specific may be reassigned from one office to another within the same agency.

Customs personnel have been known to oppose their transfers in the past.

Some time ago, Port of Cebu collector Lourdes Mangaoang questioned her reassignment to the Port of Iloilo, saying it had not been approved by Finance Secretary Margarito Teves.

Later, Teves also directed Mangaoang to the Manila International Container Port (MICP), did not immediately have his post after being reassigned to the Office of the Commissioner—a move generally considered as being placed on floating status.

**2006 Mitsubishi Skills Olympics Winners:**

| Category | Name | Dealer |
|---|---|---|
| Vehicle Sales | Ms. Lineinda Ibalim | Diamond Motor Corp. |
| Genuine Parts Merchandiser | Mr. Anthony Peralta | Carworld, Inc. |
| Service Advisor | Mr. Fernando Ramos | Carworld, Inc. |
| Service Technician | Mr. Nelson Bustillo | Diamond Motor Corp. |
| Service Team | | Union Motor Corp. |
| Skills Olympics Overall Champion | | Union Motor Corp. |

Service Plus

MITSUBISHI MOTORS

## Noli off to US today for Ford funeral rites

By Cynthia D. Balana

VICE PRESIDENT NOLI DE CASTRO will attend state funeral services for former United States President Gerald R. Ford in Washington, D.C., as the special representative of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

De Castro will leave for Washington today and is expected back in Manila by Friday.

The 38th president of the US, Ford died on Tuesday, Dec. 26, at the age of 93. He became president in August 1974 following the resignation of President Richard M. Nixon as a result of the Watergate scandal.

The idea of the US began with a prayer service and public viewing of Ford's body on Friday next (Saturday in Manila) at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church in Palm Desert, California, near the home Ford retired to following his presidency and lived in for the last 30 years of his life.

De Castro said he was instructed to only attend the Mass and not the grand funeral during the ceremony on Jan. 2 at the Washington National Cathedral where President George W. Bush is expected to speak. He said it was Malacañang that provided his itinerary.

Ford will be interred in a hillside site south of his presidential museum in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on Jan. 4.

On Wednesday, President Arroyo sent a letter to Betty Ford, the president's widow, to convey the nation's condolences.

"The Filipino nation will always remember the late President not only as a true friend of the Philippines, but as a dedicated leader who led [the] country through a challenging period of transition for all Americans," Ms. Arroyo wrote.

"It was through President Ford's quiet and dignified leadership that the United States once again gathered the moral and strategic vision to serve as an inspiration for all freedom-loving peoples of the world," she said.

The US Embassy in Manila, in a statement, said President Ford was a great man who devoted the best years of his life to serving his country. He was also a strong supporter of US-Philippine relations, it said, and served on the US Navy in support of the US landings at Leyte and Mindoro during World War II.

In December 1975, he ventured to visit the Philippines, this time as President of the United States.

## Abra gov mum on solon's slay

ABRA GOV. VICENTE VALERA HAS REFUSED to give a formal statement to police regarding allegations that he masterminded the killing of Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr.

Director Anna Wivenia, director of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), yesterday said investigators from CIDG and the Quezon City police went to see Valera at Camp Crame on Saturday.

Valera has been detained in the camp since early Saturday after he and his aides were arrested for traveling on a vehicle without license plates. Police also found several guns in his car.

"Our investigators went to him and he avoided to be interviewed. But he refused to give any formal statement [on the Bersamin murder]," Wivenia said.

But he said Valera promised to appear before Quezon City police chief Sr. Supt. Hermogenes Gurdiel and give a statement on the murder of Bersamin. Valera's police chief earlier went to detail on the grounds of the Mt. Carmel Church in Quezon City on Dec. 16.

"Otherwise, there was nothing significant in the interview," said Wivenia, who added that he expects Valera to show any involvement in the killing from what he has said in previous interviews.

Valera and his aides were likely to spend New Year's Eve in detention as his lawyers were still trying to arrange bail for him yesterday.

The police's Traffic Management Group has filed charges of illegal possession of firearms, a bailable offense, against the governor and his companions.

—Ryan Pape

Mula January 1 - 31, 2007 handog ng

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# Saddam Hussein buried in hometown

From page A1

killed or many during a bloody quarter century-rule was truly dead.

Saddam was captured in an underground hideout near Tikrit on Dec. 13, 2003, eight months after he fled Baghdad ahead of advancing American troops.

The former Iraqi leader's burial place is about 1 km from the graves of his sons Odai and Qusai at the main town cemetery. The sons and a grandson were killed in a gunbattle with the American forces in Mosul in July 2003.

## Vengeance

Out Abdullah, a businessman's teacher in Tikrit, said after scandal viewer black to mourn the city's favorite son.

"Saddam will be a hero in our eyes," she said. "I have five kids and I will teach them to take revenge on Americans."

Before blanket the executors in Tikrit and said nobody was allowed to leave or enter the city for four days. Despite the security precaution, gunmen took to the streets, carrying pictures of Saddam, shooting into the air and calling for vengeance.

Security forces also set up roadblocks at the entrances to another Sunni stronghold, Samarra, and a curfew was imposed after about 500 went into the streets to protest the execution.

Among mourning Sunnis there was deep anger, born not only of Saddam's execution but of the loss of their decades-long political and economic dominance that began with Saddam's ouster in the US invasion nearly four years ago.

"The president, the leader, Saddam Hussein is a martyr and God will put him along with other martyrs," said Yahya al-Ahmed, who led prayer at a swearing-friend mosque memorialized by Saddam in Tikrit.

A day earlier, Iraqis awoke to television

**OWNER UNKNOWN: This photo obtained by the Associated Press from an Arab language web site appears to show Saddam hanging on a noose. It appeared to have been taken by a cameraphone.**

images of a noose being dipped over Saddam's neck and his white-shrouded body the pre-dawn work of black-hooded hangmen. They used to had as new video emerged showing Saddam exchanging taunts with executioners before the gallows floor dropped away and the former dictator swung from the rope.

In Baghdad's Shiite neighborhood of Sadr City on Saturday, minutes of the three shooter of automatic rifle took to the streets on to celebrate, dancing, beating drums and hanging Saddam in effigy. Celebratory gunfire erupted across other Shiite neighborhoods in Baghdad and other predominantly Shiite regions of the country.

## Sunni stronghold

There was no sign of a feared Sunni uprising in retaliation for the execution, and the bloodshed from civil murderer was not far off the daily average—52 from bombings and death squads.

Outside the Sunni insurgent stronghold of Ramadi, west of the capital, Jordan marched with Saddam picture and waived Iraqi flags.

Defying curfews, hundreds took to the streets wearing coverage in Samarra, north of Baghdad, and gunmen paraded and fired into the air in support of Saddam in Tikrit, his hometown.

Still, authorities imposed curfews question Iraqis continue to the several-day lockdown put in place after Saddam was sentenced to death on Nov. 5.

The responses within Iraq to Saddam's death echoed the larger reaction across the Middle East, with the countries exploiting and his defenders proclaiming him a martyr.

## Problems remain

But some Iraqis—like 35-year-old Haider Kamael, a rarely ever owner to cast flagback—wondered what would really change with the execution of Saddam.

"He's gone, but our problems continue," said the Shiite Muslim, whose uncle was killed in one of Saddam's many brutal purges. "My brother's problems on sometimes after that. Some former fighters fighting Shiites can listen and hunt us Shiite."

There were shown at the authority of a US surgeon in Baghdad as soldiers having breakfast learned Saddam's hallows hanged.

But current photo video posted on the Internet showed Saddam's final moments, including taunting language that also, pointing where the TV coverage cut off as it Saddam was hooded in his final seconds leading up to his execution. And reporting Saddam's last words of the movements. While the sentence was carried out, he calmly recited verses from the Koran was clear sense.

Finally, Saddam's body, barely the waist swinging, the Shiite fight—his rush apparently stopped.

One of the most striking things about the grisly videos, perhaps, was how calmly and cooperative in the instant he entered.

Saddam had reportedly asked that, as Iraq's commander in chief, he be said he faces firing squad instead. He was sentenced to die on the gallows—although he were eager, also carried a trap. Reuters coverage.

When the time came, before dawn on Saturday, Saddam did not resist his familiar military and were with his gaunty facial but a brisk nod now a white shirt, black trousers and black shoes. He put head him was carefully combed. His soft was expertly trimmed neatly clipped.

The US pair did Saddam's struggle hands when 60 soldiers guards marched the room to the Iraqi government, and Interior Affairs, a portrait of Saddam in Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. But it was apparently his last official act as prime minister.

Saddam was taken to a former military intelligence headquarters in Baghdad's Shiite neighborhood of Kadhimiyah, in northern Baghdad.

Outside the complex, he had a conversation dissidents are shot in the facility.

Moqtada al-Sadr, an Iranian-based cleric who embraced the emerging, told the British broadcasting Service. But Saddam's men not validated.

"But not all Saddam was unusual and to hold control," Maliki said. "He was aware of his fate and he knew he was about to face death. He said, 'This is my end, this is the end of my life, but I wanted my life as a fighter and as a political soldier so that my death not frighten me.'" AP

## Saddam appears calm in final moments

BAGHDAD, Iraq—THE SCENE was all once evaluation and thrilling.

One of the most authorities daily news in the 20th century, the hands bound behind him, was led up the stairs of the gallows by masked executioner leather cuffs. A few seconds later, a trapdoor swung open and—with a crash—the eyewitness dead.

Saddam may have been the first chair of state executed in the age of the Internet and the cameraphone. Probably because of that, his death was graphically documented on video, and available within hours.

The executed Hollywood actor—one of the few officials to video aired on Iraqi TV and several web sites, the former strongman did not plead for his life nor did he remorse. Instead, he was defiant, even defiant, as he was led to the gallows, who replied to the executioners who chipped his neck around him. The man killed are described executioner hoods of the actual hanging.

But current photo video posted on the Internet showed Saddam's final moments, including taunting language that also, pointing where the TV coverage cut off as it Saddam was hooded in his final seconds leading up to his execution. And reporting Saddam's last words of the movements. While the sentence was carried out, he calmly recited verses from the Koran was clear sense.

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# 2007 Year of the Fire Boar: Clash of fire, water

From page A1

According to long chat expert Marites Allen, the year of the fire boar will bring some interesting developments, both positive and negative.

As with any year, certain businesses will thrive in 2007, while some will not be so lucky.

Certain zodiac signs will also be luckier than others, depending on what animal sign they were born in and even the time and date of their births.

Allen noted that the Year of the Fire Boar sets clashes initiated by clashing elements, fire and water, with water being an element in nature on the boar.

The could mean conflict and even tragedies and illnesses, said Allen, premises of the World of living that life.

She also noted that the Year of the Fire Boar did not commence spring, which the Chinese consider a lucky season as spring connotes new life or beginnings.

While the Year of the Fire Dog last year started on Jan. 29, the coming Year of the Fire Boar starts on Feb. 18, until after Feb. 3 to 5 which is the start of spring in the Chinese lunar calendar.

"Last year, we had a double spring—one in the start of the year and another one at the tail end of the year, this coming February," Allen explained.

"But the coming Year of the Fire Boar does not have spring at all," she said.

This does not bode well for the coming year, she said.

As if the absence of spring were not enough, Allen said the fire boar also dominates the Year of the Fire Boar.

"This means that there's a strong volcanic fallen in illnesses and diseases. There are strong indications that there may be outbreaks," she said in an interview.

Despite these indications, however, the spread of diseases, even fatal ones, can be prevented, she said.

People should take the precautions to avoid getting sick—get enough rest, eat in a healthy diet, and exercise regularly.

## More tragedies

Aside from possible outbreaks of diseases, the Year of the Fire Boar, with its conflicting elements, could also bring tragedies, particularly air and sea disasters.

She said the clashing elements of water could mean aircraft or shipping-related accidents.

Allen said that last year, Feng shui analysts indicated "fatal tragedies" as the start and end of the year.

We had that landslide in Leyte near the start of the year. We also remember the incident in Ilocos as a fatal tragedy. Then at the end of the year, there was Mayon Volcano, plus the typhoons," she said.

## Quarrelsome patriarchs

The Year of the Fire Boar may also see patriarchs having clear lines about succession, with intervening the husband or wife, family members and even the leader of a country.

The hostile number 5 may bring legal problems and plots of masculine-ruling. Husbands will be a bit less tolerant in 2007. There will be quarrels and aggressions with serious repercussions," Allen said.

## Businesses to enter and to shun

She said businesses falling under the metal and earth industries have "great potential to harness the prosperity luck."

Lucky businesses include airlines, vehicle and computer-related industries, mining and real estate, healthcare and other infrastructure-related industries.

Businesses that would face challenges are those that use a lot of fire and electricity, including restaurants and the entertainment industry, she said.

## Lucky, unlucky signs

People born under certain animal signs will fare better than others.

Those born in the years of the Boar, Sheep and Monkey will be in for a good 2007, said Allen.

The sheep will be "truly blessed with good fortune and luck," the monkey will have a "fruitful" year with numerous wealth-making opportunities and much luck in tomorrow.

The boar will be plenty of opportunities and good luck for the boar and people born under this sign will be able to make their dreams come true in 2007.

The rabbit will continue to have an "eventful" year, with some risk of physical and emotional hardships if not enough rest is taken.

The tiger, rooster and dragon will see their luck improve in 2007 compared with 2006.

The rat, ox, snake, dog and boar will not be as lucky in the Year of the Fire Boar. The rat will prosper in terms of wealth and financial luck, while the dog will have a stubborn year, with many petty squabbles and other stressful situations.

The ox, being in the "affluent" northeast sector in the year of the fire boar, will not have such a smooth year and should take care not to be overcome by anxiety.

In conflict with the boar is the snake, which means the coming year of the fire boar will see her very good for people born under this sign. Those under the snake sign should be careful when they travel and should always observe their health carefully.

The boar itself is not seen to be very lucky this year, due mainly to the conflicting elements of fire and water.

## Conflicting beliefs

Allen is a practitioner not just of Chinese astrology but of feng shui, the subtle Chinese belief system involving a mix of geographical, religious, philosophical, mathematical, aesthetic and astrological ideas. Auto-ding in Chinese is "wet superstitions, not evil spirits, not magic."

"We do a lot of research and use analysis is based on scientific calculations," she said.

But even some ethnic Chinese do not themselves believe in feng shui.

"For me, feng shui is not about arranging beds and desks or having that yellow or white or evening sun on the curb desk. It's about feeling good about the place. If you are in a building and it feels exotic, I wouldn't want to stay in that building for one long," said Jose Concepcion Jr., of the prominent Concepcion business clan.

"And if you're referring to the wars initiated years ago being a good one or the yellow cat with a moving arm that's saying to say, 'money come, money come,' no, we don't use that in our business or offices. Mainly because they don't seem to my business sense" she added.

# Bicol GK homes withstood 'Reming'

From page A1

injured, and 23,000 families homeless in flood-slime; scored, ing to the latest official count.

That in the 2,000 GK homes spread around Barlahnia, seven, slain was killed or hurt by them night-midnight in November and by the softer "Milenyo" in October, said Medina.

## Relief centers

In fact, some of the GK sites sealed up serving as relief and evacuation centers post-Reming, Medina said in an interview.

This was particularly true of the 30-GK sites in Camarines Sur and Cavite in Albay two of the worst-hit provinces "where our homes, clothes, became bedchambers from outside," according to Medina.

"Only the neighboring barangays were all wiped out, but all they needed to do was repair their roofs because the father, the floods, did not reach them. They were not affected by the mudslides as in the relief work," he said.

The well-planned villages were spared from the mudflow as they were situated in areas that had been given a safety "clearance" by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, a key government of a GK community-champion, he said.

It's true that around 300 GK homes in the region had their roofs damaged by Reming, but roofs and there were a scientific explanation for this.

"Our roofs were designed for typhoon speeds of up to 200 kph. They withstood Milenyo's 280 kph, but Reming's was up to 360 kph," he said.

Established in 1986, General Kalinga has been forging partnership between government, business and civic sectors in providing decent shelter for former slum dwellers.

## Sweat equity

It is a mammoth task to construct some 70 percent of the population is considered landless, many of whom end up squatting in highly vulnerable areas like mudflows, riverbanks and hillsides.

GK basically operates by pooling the resources of various sectors. Government provides the land, the initial funding and infrastructure. The private sector, through its counterpart funds or building materials, adds the finishing touches, while the beneficiaries provide "sweat equity" by toiling part in the construction.

There are now more than 1,000 GK communities nationwide, found in 64 of the country's 80 provinces, housing half a million residents, and Medina whose work earned him the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership last year.

Despite the recent calamity-ravaged area disasters, Medina assured

**HELPING** in Bicol: volunteers

against the long-term efforts of the devastation from the succeeding typhoons.

## Exodus to Metro Manila

"We are an exodus of many squatters in Metro Manila and other cities from the provinces where there have been massive evacuation because of the typhoons," he said.

This phenomenon was hardly new but a long-observed trend in urban migration, he said.

To help mitigate this, he said GK would be focusing its efforts in 2007 on Bicol, as well as Samar, Leyte, Mindoro, areas that have most severe displacements.

The target is to build at least 1,000 housing units in Albay alone before the onset of the rainy season, he said.

Before doing that, however, GK will pause to give recognition to its growing army of volunteers.

## Heroes Summit

Medina announced that he is around "Bayani Summit" (Heroes' Summit) on Jan. 12, General Kalinga is honoring individuals, corporations, schools and other organizations which have helped in GK's regular projects and disaster-relief activities in 2006.

Among the honorees are the high school students of the Saint Pedro Poveda College, who donated their piggy bank savings pesos in October, donating their budget for the party's GK.

Some 1,000 Filipino Americans also held fund-raising activities in 11 cities in the United States from October to December last year, raising enough funds to build around 600 GK houses, said Medina.

The summit will also highlight the contributions of the Philippine Military Academy cadets and the Ateneo de Manila community among others.

"We will honor them and show that ours can be a country of heroes, of people who have not stopped hoping and dreaming of a chain free country," Medina said.

# RP cinema marks 110th year today

By Nick Deocaliyo
Contributor

CINEMA IN THE PHILIPPINES celebrates its 110th year today. It all started in the Spanish-Filipino metropolis, "El Embrujo," (you'll be bothered, it was on Jan. 1, 1897 when the first film exhibition was held at No. 12, Interior in Escolta, Manila.

The film shown was called "Escenas Filipinas: Corridas de Peseta," (Bullfights in Scientific Spectacle), started after the Xiamend when he taught the first film equipment to the Philippines, Señor Francisco Dominguez.

It was not no suspicious part for the motion picture. Only two days earlier, José Rizal was executed at Bagumbayan. One year after, Filipinos declared their independence from Spain after months of bloody fighting, only to be plunged deeper into political chaos when the United States marched to the fledgling republic.

The [illegible] century also became a struggle for recognition for cinema in an age when the Spanish zarzuela dominated the entertainment scene. Despite its difficult birth, it is remarkable to find in the century that followed cinema becoming the defining culture that helped shape the contemporary Filipino.

### Hispanic beginnings

The days of its birth wreath much about the ancestry of the Spanish cinema. While much has been made of local film being an extension of Hollywood cinema or as embodying the national identity, it should not come as a surprise to know that Filipino cinema owes much to its Hispanic beginnings. Let us start with the words we use to talk about film. Ever wondered where words like *pelikula, sine, artista, taklitan, letrero,* and even the one which we use for the banal *komersiyalan* come from? They were obviously derived from the Spanish *película, cine, artista, taquilla, talent* and *comercials*.

And what about Catholic religious imagery dominating the visual design of many Filipino films? Nonoy Imao it a shame in front of an altar that a second confession is made or maybe all confess at the end of many Filipino movies. Even in the films that challenge the Church—from Ishmael Bernals "Himala" to Lino Brocka's "Desaparecidos"—our film artists cannot rise out their deep-seated Catholic roots and ethos. More important than these external symbols, however, is the Catholic ideology embedded in them that once became the basis for our calling ourselves "Filipinos." It used to mean to be born to be "Filipino" meant to be Hispanic—and Catholic.

More telling of our films' Hispanic flavor are the screen names that movie stars use to make themselves more attractive to the public. American movies stars like Rose Hampton became Rosa del Rosario and Anita Linda assumed the moniker, Anita Linda. Dorothy Jones became one Isabelita Rodriguez. Dolphy's real name, Rolando Monleon became Edmundo Garduce became Eduardo Garcia who not only acted but directed films like the famous "Lamberto."

What name[illegible] values went with the naming of our movie stars? Were not these actors such Spanish desired names the screen [illegible] to subdued by mainstream society? And what lies awaited those who answered native names like Pepe, Dolp dray reaper or Mariano? Were those not the funny characters who got clubbed and ridiculed in their scenes?

### Alien form

Knowing how our cinema started makes us reflect on the values we attach to a form that has dominated our cultural development. It makes us wonder how an alien form like film which is not indigenous has an imported technology came to be the form of our national culture and identity.

Take for example the way musicals came to be the dominant genre in the emerging Filipino cinema. This was because of early film's close affinity to the Spanish zarzuela, a form of musical theater that was the dominant theatre from at the time of Mac's arrival in the country.

The pioneering film of the Spanish-speaking movie director

OLD MOVIE poster of "Moobata Mo Kayo" starring Rogelio de la Rosa and Carmen Rosales. 110 years of Philippine cinema

[illegible] José Nepomuceno, "Dalagang Bukid," was based on a zarzuela (musical) of the same title. Dalagang Bukid was followed by six movies of hybrid musical-zarzuelas, while no films were ever made of indigenous tales like the Maranao epic of [illegible] Darang Island or the Lam-ang epic of Ilocos.

The Spanish roots of Philippine cinema will us of a past that we present-day Filipinos have learned to obscure in our collective memory. The zarzuela-years come in several stages. Two of the more pronounced causes were were the influence of the Spanish culture when the Americans became our colonial masters who forcefully substituted English for the Spanish language. The other stems with the nationalist desire to separate everything foreign with what was deemed native.

### No marker

The early period of cinema in the Philippines has been so far gotten that we have even failed to recognize the very street where the first film exhibition was made. Is it too late to find? No. 12 Escolta and perhaps place a historical marker on it in order to designate its importance to Filipino culture? If we cannot find it, surely one can still locate the intersection between Escolta and a street now called Tomas Pinpin where in 1897 the second film screening in the country was held inside a jewelry shop at No. 38 owned by French Impresario, the Gaye Southers, (to the second floor of this current edifice, now Nueva Ensiklopedia, Leibbrand and Perlia, showed films using the Lumiere cinematographe imported by another Spaniard, Antonio Ramos.

Paradoxically, the roots of our national cinema may be found in its international origins. Cinema in the Philippines was international from birth. It was Spaniards who brought in the first equipment, French films were the first to be shown in makeshift venues owned by French jewelers and capitalized by Swiss financiers. The first real movie house was set up by a British named Walgrah. German, Spanish, Italian and even Russian films were shown. Manila was truly a cosmopolitan city when films arrived here.

While the Philippines may rank third after India and China in showing the first films in Asia (Japan and Siam came only a few months later), the moving picture device rapidly spread to other islands within the year of its arrival, 1897. Accounts of film screenings were reported to first to a bustling port city not only to progress to Manila, and in the island of Cebu. In Cebu, the street where the first film show was held became known—Calle Cinco. The oldest street in the Philippines. Again, not a sign never there to bear witness to film's initial foray into the archipelago.

### Cinema and nationhood

Recalling cinema's origin gives us an occasion to remember the country's historical past and raise questions about its evolving identity. Film history may even make us take notice of the fact that it is much older than the Philippines as a formal nation-state. With Rizal's birth date in 1897 and our formal declaration as an independent nation coming only in 1946, it gives us much pause to think about the role cinema played in preparing and shaping us Filipinos into becoming the nation that we are today.

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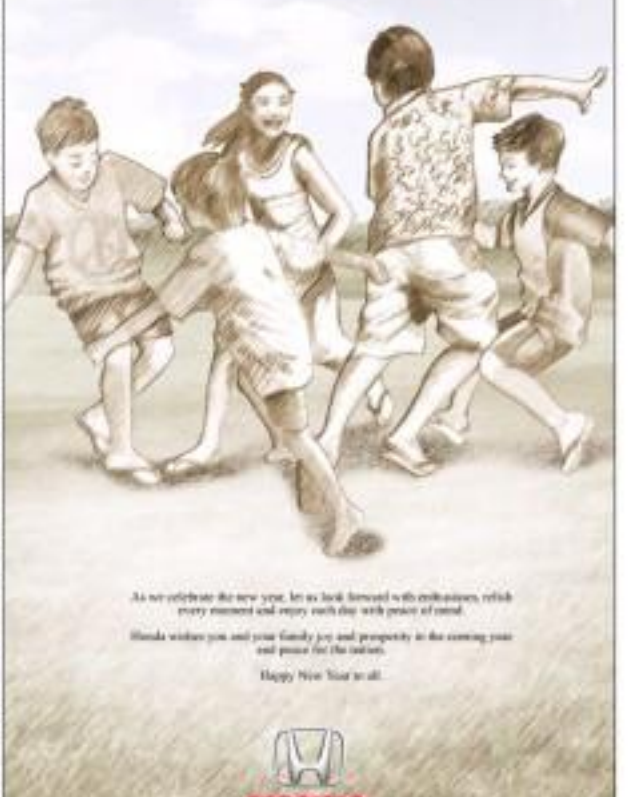
*Let's welcome the new year with youthfulness filled with joy and happiness.*



As we celebrate the new year, let us look forward with enthusiasm, relish every moment and enjoy each day with peace of mind.

Honda wishes you and your family joy and prosperity in the coming year and peace for the nations.

Happy New Year to all.

HONDA

# 4 reasons why Smith should be in RP custody

By Sen. Leticia R. Shahani,
Alonzo-Human Rights Center,
Women and Gender Institute,
Cedar Walsh
Contributors

THE UNDERSIGNED GROUPS express their outrage over how the Department of Justice and the Department of Foreign Affairs have failed in the outright bid Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith who, we have learned, has been released to the custody of the US Embassy upon orders of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Those officials have forgotten that they represent the Filipino people and not an American government.

Instead of adhering to the judiciary's interpretation of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), they have discussed the legal aspects of the case based on the terms of the bail set by the court. They have even resorted to justify the transfer of Smith's custody to the United States.

This case is not only an issue of custody.

How the government reaches itself before a supposed co-equal sovereign will ultimately impact on the exercise of our sovereignty and will show how far the government is willing to abide by the provisions of the Constitution in upholding the dignity of the Filipino people, in ensuring our human rights, and in protecting the rights of women against violence.

When the Philippines ratified the VFA, many nationalists feared the return of military always. Women's groups were apprehensive since any heavily militarized area is a breeding ground for prostitution and acts of violence against women.

One critical aspect of the VFA is in the area of criminal jurisdiction, to wit:

**COMMENTARY**

be interpreted in a way that would leave the People of the Philippines without recourse or remedy against a US personnel charged with an offense.

2. The same paragraph clearly distinguishes between the period of conduct of judicial proceedings, when the US has exercised custody over Smith, and the period of appeal, stating which he shall be detained in "facilities agreed on by appropriate Philippine and United States authorities."

### Clear distinction

Philippine law clearly distinguishes between the status of the felony of an accused during the conduct of the judicial proceedings in the trial court and on appeal.

Section 4 of Rule 114 of Supreme Court A.M. 0-92-1, judges are required to immediately issue orders of commitment after the conviction of national prisoners (those sentenced to these years and one day and above). This should be done once an appeal is filed.

However, in recognition of the VFA, Judge Benjamin Pozon ordered the commitment of Smith to the Makati City Jail pending the agreement on the appropriate facility for the latter between the Philippines and the US.

Article I Sec. 10 speaks of "conditement or detention" in facilities agreed on by the two parties. The judge, however, overstepped and ruled that the "facilities" under this paragraph should be those use by the Philippine authorities and not by the Americans, as the Philippines could not possibly exercise jurisdiction over such places.

### Constitution is supreme

The judge correctly applied the appropriate provisions considering that Smith has already been convicted.

The exercise of criminal jurisdiction should be construed strictly in favor of the Philippine government because of the terms of the VFA.

Allowing Smith to remain in US custody would constitute a violation of the principles of the Constitution insofar as there is an abdication of the right of the State to exercise sovereign power over Smith.

3. We should not forget that our Constitution is supreme law and cannot even remotely pretend to be subservient.

### Smith is 'national prisoner'

Unless Smith merits different treatment, he must be treated in the same way as other "national prisoners" and be committed to a Philippine facility ... where Philippine jurisdiction can be exercised at all times.

4. We should be equally mindful of our country's other treaty obligations.

Just, Richard Iordan said that even Smith's lawyer wrote "friends" was expected to question the transfer before the Supreme Court, the President and her Cabinet would have to explain their actions before the high tribunal.

"They have to answer the issue of whether they're justified in bullying treaty obligations in accordance with their interpretation of the treaty," he said.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said Pimentel's order will now count as the "law of the case" and will be binding on the Supreme Court.

Santiago said that while the condition for Smith's transfer had been complied with following an agreement between Philippine officials, Ambassador Kristie Kenney, the executive branch could not carry out the transfer without court's authorization.

"The executive branch can't act unilaterally," she said.

# Politics clouds RP economic prospects

By Amanda Davinila

**ANALYSIS**

THE PHILIPPINE PESO AND stock market ended the year on a high note, with the currency closing at 49.03 to the US dollar on Friday, its strongest rally in nearly six years.

Share price closed on the last trading day of the year with the main index surging to 2,992.34, its best finish since April 7,1997 (at 2,996.64).

The surge prompted chart dealers to claim it reflected investors' bullish outlook for the economy in 2007. "We ended the year with a bang as the fundamentals are looking up" for an economy on the mend, says First Grade Holdings Inc.'s chief.

A rally extending up to the first quarter of 2007 is uncertain.

### Bankers' warning

There are warnings from local bankers that the peso would weaken to 50 to the dollar next year and could be traded at a high of 48 and a low of 52 against the dollar, "given the political uncertainties arising from the May elections."

Examining the economic outlook for 2007 from the perspective of growth rather than the more volatile movements of the share market and the peso-dollar rate, Ibe Bernardo Villegas, president of the University of Asia and the Pacific, paints a more pessimistic economic scenario.

In a paper titled, "Is the Philippine economy ready for takeoff?" Villegas calls attention to the political uncertainties that make fund managers nervous.

### Expected turbulence

"There will be organized turbulence ... in the months leading to the May 2007 elections," he says.

"Increased confrontation between the Presidency and her political opponents and more aggressive moves to amend the Constitution will surely send confused signals to potential investors," says Villegas.

The paper asks whether the economy would be ready for a new round of "muddling through."

The paper says strong exports, hefty increases in remittances from overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and a favorable environment for agribusiness have made it possible for the GDP to grow by 5.4 percent in the first nine months of 2006. This, however, has failed to lift the country's GDP growth of Vietnam, India and China.

The paper recognizes that fund managers are driving the Philippine stock market to its highest high. It said October, the Philippine index breached the 2,600 mark for the first time in seven years, growing 23.9 percent year-to-date. It was surpassed only by India and Indonesia.

### Optimism

Much of the optimism about the Philippine economy can be attributed to a perception that significant fiscal reforms have been made. The government's deficit, thanks to improved tax revenue generation and restraint in government spending.

Success in increasing tax revenues helped to gain them the confidence of investors. The country's GDP rate Villegas. "A balanced budget by 2008 is deemed attainable."

At last year's Philippine Business Conference, the World Bank representative in the Philippines, Andrew van Amerkroy, opined that the country could join its Asian neighbors in growing at 7 to 8 percent annually if it sent "strong policy signals" committed to attaining macroeconomic and fiscal stability while improving governance.

### Improve business climate

Much more has to be done to improve the business climate, as can be inferred from the relative-

To page 2, col. 3 of Politics

ly low ranking of the Philippines in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI).

The Philippines received only $1.13 billion in FDI in 2005, Vietnam, $2 billion, and Thailand and Malaysia almost $6 billion each.

"Foreign investors are still being turned off by corruption, high energy costs, high tax rates, uncertain regulatory policies, crime, and stringent labor laws," says the Villegas paper.

"If these obstacles are not addressed in the next four years, the Philippines will just muddle through instead of taking off at growth rates of 7 to 10 percent," it adds.

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### Infrastructure backlog

The paper points out that the single most important factor for the resilience of the Philippine economy is the bumper foreign exchange remittances from OFWs that in 2005 amounted to some $10 billion (P512 billion).

The report also says that one of the possible explanations for the disappointing results in most of the consumer-oriented businesses over the past 12 months is the significant slowdown of agriculture performance in 2005. Agriculture grew at less than 2 percent compared with more than 6 percent in 2004.

### Growth engines

The growth engines in the medium term are infrastructure spending, tourism, business outsourcing and manufacture exports. Other possible high growth sectors are logistics, high-value processes, agribusiness and furniture exports.

The biggest impediments to attaining growth rates of 7 to 8 percent and to making a dent on the serious poverty situation, says the report, "is the uncertainty generated by the noisy mudslinging of the nation's political class."

The Philippines is expected to average $1.80 to the US dollar in 2007. Short-term interest rates will average 5.2 percent, the lowest since 2002. GDP is expected to grow 5.5 percent, behind the performance of its more dynamic neighbors.

But the medium term (2008-2010) GDP can grow at 6 percent. The peso will depreciate to the level of $1.80 to the dollar as export revenues cannot keep pace with the burgeoning imports of capital goods needed for massive infrastructure projects planned for the next three to four years.

### Restrictions on foreign equity

"If the political environment becomes the governmental and the opposition is resolved peacefully, the country is poised to receive higher levels of FDIs. Especially crucial for a higher level of FDI is the removal from the Constitution of restrictions on foreign equity in natural resources, utilities, retail, education and media.

"Under the protectionist scenario, in which the status quo is assumed, the economy would attract only $1.5 billion in annual average FDIs in the next four years," says the paper.

"It is clear, therefore, that only if the assumptions under the optimistic scenario are realized could the Philippine economy take off into self-sustaining high growth."

# Leftist solons seek GMA impeachment

By Michael Lim Ubac
and TJ Burgonio

CALLING PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo a "national traitor," the militant bloc in the House of Representatives moved yesterday to press new impeachment charges against her for handing Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith to US control before the courts could rule on the custody issue.

"It's treachery against the Charter," declared Rep. Satur Ocampo of Bayan Muna, pointing out that Arroyo's surrender to the US forces will cement her reputation as a rabid US puppet."

Ocampo predicted the handover of Smith would "provide the impetus for protests once the people protest masses," a reference to the January 9 rally on Smith's end in February of the popular revolts that toppled former Presidents Joseph Estrada and Ferdinand Marcos.

Rep. Rito Aquino of Abayan also said Mr. Arroyo would pay for "treachery" based on what Makati jail under the terms of detainee.

"It's contempt under the rules of court, in total disrespect of the Constitution and judicial processes," Bonito said in a text message.

Bonito said the surrender of Smith to US custody was a result of national ground for impeachment.

"They have no dignity because they have no spine to hold them up. (Be this then while and trust be flashed down) the entire cabal that usurped the throne today," she fumed.

Rep. Liza Maza of Gabriela cited it as "US-Arroyo conspiracy" saying Smith's transfer "can only be possible with the consent of GMA."

Rep. Teddy Casiño of Bayan Muna said the handover was "an act of treason," adding that the "forces against the Republic are working with impunity."

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. promised that a public explanation from the Arroyo on the Smith transfer.

"Ultimately, Gloria should have the courage to tell the people that these things were done upon her direction," Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said.

Pimentel said that while Senator Rodolfo Biazon had admitted having the transfer order, it was clear that "Gloria's ghost was campaigning all those moves of hers."

Just, Richard Iordan said that even Smith's lawyer wrote "friends" was expected to question the transfer before the Supreme Court, the President and her Cabinet would have to explain their actions before the high tribunal.

"They have to answer the issue of whether they're justified in bullying treaty obligations in accordance with their interpretation of the treaty," he said.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said Pimentel's order will now count as the "law of the case" and will be binding on the Supreme Court.

Santiago said that while the condition for Smith's transfer had been complied with following an agreement between Philippine officials, Ambassador Kristie Kenney, the executive branch could not carry out the transfer without court's authorization.

"The executive branch can't act unilaterally," she said.

# GMA supports Smith's transfer

From page A1

because of pressure from the United States, and said Mr. Arroyo had the power to interpret and carry out Philippine treaty obligations with the United States.

He dismissed an opposition threat to file a new impeachment case against Mr. Arroyo over the issue. The treaty on this page 2

Smith is detained at the Makati City Jail, where he had been held for 25 days, in the embassy compound was carried out at past 11 p.m. yesterday. The former Department of Justice (DOJ) spokesman removed the unmarked sedan from the jail in the darkness of night.

Gonzales, whose opinion on the issue of custody is spelled out under the Visiting Forces Agreement paved the way for Smith's transfer, said that "the President really caused the VFA to be implemented because that's in the law and we are bound by it."

Gonzales added that Arroyo "is not trying to circumvent the law," saying it was "normal" for the executive to carry this out.

"When you have a treaty, that is being implemented by the Executive," he said in a phone interview.

"The court interprets the law but the Executive also has to implement, implement and execute the law," Gonzales said.

### No Palace dictation

Justice Secretary Rosalio de Leon has said that it was his office which authorized the transfer.

Jimeta said the Palace had left it to the departments of interior, justice and foreign affairs to implement the VFA on the matter of Smith's custody.

He was cited recalling the report of Secretary Puno on the details of the transfer," Jimeta said in a phone interview.

He stressed that what the departments did was in line with their duties.

"We don't have to dictate to them," Jimeta added.

### Palace interpretation

Asked to comment on the opposition the transfer had engendered, Jimeta said: "Let's just wait for developments ... Business as usual pa rin ang pamamalakad ng Malacañang (It's still business as usual in Malacañang)."

Gonzales said that in the legal opinion sought by the DILG, he reiterated the treaty obligations of Manila and Washington and that "the VFA should take effect."

Gonzales also said the Supreme Court of Appeals had not rendered the custody issue, it had stopped the word "freed" on the government motion and on an agreement signed by Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo and US Ambassador Kenney that Smith would not be transferred to US custody.

"We understood it to mean we can already interpret it however we can," Gonzales said.

Gonzales brushed aside opposition claims that the United States pressured the Philippines to reflect Smith's transfer.

### No pressure

"There was no pressure as cited. I don't even talk to the Americans," he said.

He also said the executive branch did not interfere in judicial matters or undercut the authority of the Court of Appeals.

"We are not intervening to judicial matters. That's why all those processes were filed with the CA," he said.

The CA has rescinded the lower court and did not reject the Court of Appeals to have another resolution on the matter.

Gonzales also said the issue could not be used as a basis for impeaching the President.

"It's not an impeachable offense, but if you think it's an impeachable offense, then you file an impeachment case," he said.

With a report from Sarwat Qutumcosa

# Economic gains branded as an illusion

From page A1

the Philippines, told Agence France Presse.

"It's easy to pay down debt when you are not spending anything. And you have record remittances from OFWs," he said.

Remittances from the eight million-plus overseas Filipino workers for the year are expected to top $13 billion, giving a strong boost to domestic liquidity and a key factor in keeping the economy afloat.

Additionally, increased revenue collection reduced the budget deficit to around P60 billion, well below the target ceiling of P120 billion for this year.

With a current account surplus of $520 million in the third quarter of 2006, almost three times that of a year earlier, the government has been able to pay down debt, despite the delight of foreign investors who have helped push the stock market to levels last seen in nearly 10 years.

For Bolkiah, however, this is still being achieved at a cost.

"Spending on public infrastructure has dropped from 3.9 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2000 to 1.7 percent in 2005," he said.

Spending on education has dropped from 3.0 percent to 2.4 percent and health from 0.6 percent to 0.3 percent, "he said.

"This type of spending pattern is short-sighted, unintuitive and unsustainable."

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves conceded recently the government would need to spend at least 5 percent of GDP on infrastructure just for the country to keep up with its regional competitors.

Much of the decline in the deficit in 2006 was due to reduced government spending, he noted.

"We have to increase the level in our budget," Teves said. "What you need is a combination of fiscal discipline, higher growth and the ability to sustain those macroeconomic improvements into a meaningful experience that can be felt by the general population."

Ben Lim of the District for People Empowerment and Governance said recently that over 18 million Filipinos go hungry every year and more than 11 million are living below the poverty line.

Employment data for October, the latest available, showed 33.2 million people were employed for the month, "a decrease of 1.1 million from the 32.9 million for October 2005."

Of this number, however, only one in ten was in a regular salaried position while full-time employment was declining as employers sought out cheaper part-time labor.

### 'Walking on Knife Edge'

In a report called "Walking on a Knife Edge," economists Hideo Shikwa and Clarence Bacani noted that regular salaried workers are the primary source of personal income as revenues for their numbers are falling.

"This is what we have got—a huge number of poorly compensated salaried workforce and on a largely unemployed and income-challenged consumer base for the bulk of income," they said. ADP

IMAGES 2006

# Politics divides the nation

## 'NO' TO CHARTER CHANGE

Multisectoral groups from both the Right and the Left marched nationwide to protest the Arroyo administration's move to have a shift to a parliamentary system thru a Constituent Assembly—even after the Supreme Court junked a pro-Cha-cha signature campaign as a "grand deception." For the first time all religious groups united against the move, forcing the resumed Cha-Cha moratorium into effect—at least temporarily.

**THEN AND NOW** Demonstrators marking the Sept. 21 anniversary of martial law say "never again" to government curtailment of civil liberties.

**ARCHBISHOP GAUDENCIO ROSALES TO GMA:** "Character change, not Charter change... We're watching you!"

**BRIG. GEN. DANILO LIM,** Scout Ranger commander, reportedly called for a "withdrawal of support" for Arroyo in February.

MARINE soldiers lobby Cpl. Artel Quevedo, pro-coup leader of rebellious lieutenant Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda.

## EMBATTLED PRESIDENCY

President Arroyo battled the most serious coup attempt against her administration, survived a second impeachment bid and continued to sidestep investigations into allegations of poll cheating. She temporarily lifted the declaration of a state of emergency, soon martial-of-law-modeled efforts and arrest of military mutineers of the House of Representatives. "I have become the opposition at every turn," she told Bloomberg TV in August. But The Economist in general said her authority remained fragile and was increasingly dependent on the support of the military.

**DIEGUITO HONASAN,** suspected leader in the Feb. 23 coup plot, was captured Nov. 13 in a motel in condominium.

IMAGES 2006

# Judiciary asserts independence

## A SHINING YEAR FOR THE COURTS

In almost all controversial cases, the (Arroyo) Supreme Court took a position contrary to the administration's, raising its credibility as the protector of people's rights. Judge Benjamin Pozon, in Makati, convicted a US Marine for rape and ordered a government demand to hand over the accused to American custody in line with the Visiting Forces Agreement. Controversies officials later forced the transfer of Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith to US Embassy custody, without court consent.

## VIGILANTE KILLINGS RISE

Masses-pelo-ruling model men continue to take the law into their own hands. Extrajudicial killings soared last year, targeting journalists, labor leaders and political activists. Over 200 killings (over 700 according to the count of human rights groups) have sparked international statements of concern; over 200 militants have "disappeared" in the past five years.

IMAGES 2006

# Disasters, unprecedented in ferocity, unite a nation

## REQUIEM FOR GUINSAUGON

Not an eye was dry in the town of Saint Bernard, Southern Leyte on Feb. 27. As the farming village of Guinsaugon, 300 children and their parents had assembled to attend the "Mother's Day" celebrations whereas unseasonable heavenly continuous heavy rains crashed and buried them alive. Filipino and American soldiers mapped their way across to Mahonoy to lend a hand in the massive rescue effort. Only 132 bodies were recovered; about 1,000 missing. A huge cross now stands in the desolate mound of mud that was once Guinsaugon.

## OIL SPILL IN GUIMARAS

Off scenic Guimaras island in central Philippines, the tanker MT Solar 1 sank and spilled anywhere from 800,000 to 1.3 million liters of bunker fuel, the biggest oil spill yet in the country. Hundreds of families evacuated and over 13,000 fishermen found their livelihoods at the rocky black oil-and-slickening mush washed over 200 kilometers of pristine coast. The island hosts 1,100 hectare mangrove reserve and mangrove areas that are home to endangered dugongs, green sea turtles, blue crabs, giant clams, dolphins and other marine creatures.

## SUPER TYPHOONS FOUR IN A ROW

Typhoons "Milenyo," "Queenie," "Reming" and "Seniang" battered through the country's eastern flank one after the other in the last three months of the year. Philippine navy reports put the typhoon death toll for the year at over 1,000 with over 2,000 injured and damage to agriculture and property topping P14 billion. Most of the casualties were in Bicol.

## WOWOWEE: GAME PRIZES TO DIE FOR

After the stampede, 74 bodies lay dead. There was something so heartrending in the story of how 30,000 people ritually killed each other to get at the head of the line of a game show that promised money and prizes at the Philippine arena in Bulacan on Feb. 4. The ABS-CBN network, producers of the Wowowee game show, paid lucky ones and will force criminal charges for the dead to martyrdom.

More on Page A16

# Cooling off the big bang

LOOKING FORWARD to a new chance at peace, prosperity—and long life

PHOMMANE PHUTTE, portents of good luck in the coming Year of the Boar.

Over again, authorities banned strong explosives and campaigned for safer noisemakers, praying to see less deaths and firecracker injuries this year.

LUCKY LECHON. Having fiesta food on the New Year table is considered a propitious sign.

STAYING ALIVE. Ring in good fortune safely. Police authorities gradually raze the muzzles of their guns and encourage the use of safer noisemakers like the traditional "torotot" (horns).

SUN TSE BOOA. Health authorities report some already injured from the use of this dangerous new noisemaker—a toy bazooka, or "boga."

WHITE ALERT. Hospitals and clinics were ready for the expected deluge of people with firecracker injuries.

EXPLOSIVE NEWSUP. Firecracker makers prepared the goods for the New Year ring bang.

# Toy guns part of structure of violence

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE GUNS STACKED ON THE SIDEWALK outside a public market in Valenzuela have the pistol and assault rifle look of real-life soldier pieces.

Though not as heavy as the real thing, they're just as big, replete with a regular-size trigger, thumb safety lock and magazine.

Not far from the gun pile is a heap of realistic-looking Chinese-made plastic soldiers, tanks, police cars and camouflaged helicopters—not to mention stacks of the "water guns" that have become a big hit with children in recent years.

But one gun salesman Ninfa Pacheco, 40, was considering why Filipino arms seem to learn from the big number of firecracker and stray bullet injuries and deaths made only to look more closely at these familiar-looking objects.

"The structure of violence are always there so what can you expect?" he told the Inquirer yesterday.

Pacheco, head of the advocacy group Gun Free Society, is concerned that amid an unusually aggressive government-led effort to make us thousands all these "structures," campaigns to minimize injuries during New Year festivities are bound to fail.

"What we have are piecemeal solutions to a very serious problem," he said, noting the anti-stray bullet campaign to keep law enforcers from using their service firearms by taping the muzzle of their guns.

"It's all for a show; we don't have to prepare [for] this campaign."

Such tapes can easily be tampered with, he said, adding that a more serious effort would be to order policemen and soldiers to deposit their guns in a vault for a specific period.

Data before New Year's Eve media, from Dec. 27 to 28, the Department of Health (DOH) has already recorded 205 injuries, a significant increase from the 169 injuries during the same period in 2006, said Dr. Enrique Tayag, the chief epidemiologist.

Six of those cases were related to stray bullets. One of the victims, a woman in Metro Manila, died.

Last year, during festivities to welcome 2006, authorities recorded 19 cases involving stray bullets, a marked decrease from the 23 cases registered when Filipinos greeted 2005.

For Pacheco, a good start to curb the fatalities and incidence of gunfire injuries is to outlaw the possession of guns by civilians, since "people who want a non-violent society should also be non-violent."

"We have to halt and isolate, not to go along life," he said.

Besides guns, the DOH expressed fresh concern over the use of dee Nuga," an improvised firecracker triggered with detonated electricity.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III previously asked the Philippine Memorial Police to ban these items, considering that the DOH had already recorded 50 injuries because of them during the Dec. 21 to 27 period.

"The cases are very high considering that it's only been two years since these items became popular," he told the Inquirer.

Duque said he was also seeking a prohibition on the firecracker "paputok," which injured 22 people during the same period.

Border "bugs" and "pucuks," the leading causes of injury from firecrackers were "lawin" (21 cases), "whistle bomb" (15) and "watergun" (14).

People's Choice

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GOLD 2001
GOLD 2000
GOLD 1999

GOLD 2006


# MILF slams bomb raps

COTABATO CITY—The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has protested the filing of charges against 25 of its commanders and members in connection with the Dec. 10 bomb attack in Makilala, North Cotabato, that killed eight people.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said the group was surprised by the filing because a backdoor agreed upon with the government that the charges would be dropped.

"It was agreed [during] the last [talks] that all MILF [members] involved in the case, not only [that Mohamad Ibrahim], would be removed from the list," Kabalu said.

Among those also charged by the government were Bala Mamaguing, alias Ustadz Bala; Hadji Murad Ibrahim, Binang Imlabekan, Hanid Imlabekan, Hanid Sang, Bill Lipitan, also Datuda Ali; Samsudin Sumas, Ito, commander Hatun Bilah; Ahmad Ahmad Bushod Usman, alias Abdulbasit or Basit Usman; Zaldy Abdul, also Cabal Abdul or Bodz; and Jamiri Gilbaliad.

"We had nothing to do with the bombing or what we had said before. This is a case of harassment. We are protesting [the filing]," Kabalu said.

In four eight-page sworn affidavits, 28 wounded when a bomb exploded near the Makilala Trading Post at 8 p.m. Dec. 10.

The explosion occurred at the front plaza which was crowded with people celebrating Makilala's 52nd anniversary.

Makilala Mayor Guzaifer Ibrajaira drew bad said an eyewitness had seen a bomb at the scene before the explosion.

But Ibrajaira, the prosecutor in Cotabato province, said he could not immediately verify the claim.

Ibrajaira said the 25 MILF officers and members had helped indictment Ombrahim and Omar Bush would be tough, Ibrajaira said.

# EU welcomes Bulgaria and Romania

*Another milestone is celebrated on 1 January 2007 as the European Union welcomes two member states, Bulgaria and Romania.*

# Bulgaria

Official Name - Republic of Bulgaria
Population - 7.97 million
Area - 110,993.6 km²

# Romania

Official Name - Romania
Population - 21.7 million
Area - 238,391 km²


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INQUIRER

# OPINION

## Rapist's justice

LIKE A HANGING, THE MIDDLE-OF-THE-NIGHT transfer of convicted rapist Daniel Smith from the Makati City Jail to the US Embassy last Friday clarifies the mind. It allows us to see what is really at stake in the whole custody issue: Not the future of Philippine-American relations, but the future of the rule of law.

We can survive as a nation without the help of the Americans, if it comes to that. But we cannot survive without the rule of law. President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision to transfer custody of Lance Corporal Smith—without clearance from the Court of Appeals, and in direct defiance of a standing order of Makati Regional Trial Court Judge Benjamin Pozon—was an act of calculated political expediency: it was meant to please the Americans. But her hospitality did not only sacrifice national dignity at the altar of convenience; it also broke the law.

Worse, it encourages disrespect for the law. It reveals yet again the disturbing pattern of behavior—call it the ingenuity of incumbency—that has marked the conduct of the Arroyo administration in legal matters since the President's crisis of legitimacy erupted in 2005. This pattern is clear to anyone with eyes to see; but for the benefit of Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol, who insists on the virtues of blindness, allow us to explain it in terms even he can understand.

There is a standing order to keep Smith, the American Marine who was convicted of raping the Filipina known as "Nicole" during a rumultuous night in Subic, detained in the Makati City Jail—"until further orders from this court."

There is an existing appeal pending with the Court of Appeals, seeking a reconsideration of its decision upholding Judge Pozon's decision in other words, the first attempt to overturn the order was already denied.

There is a reasonable basis for the two courts' reading of the appropriate provision of the Visiting Forces Agreement: that conviction or acquittal in the trial court level must already constitute completion of "all judicial proceedings." To argue otherwise is to allow a convicted American soldier to remain in US custody until all appeals are exhausted, a process which can take years and a privilege which is not granted to convicted Filipinos.

Not least, there is the question of jurisdiction: The legal issue is already with the courts; the executive cannot simply shove the judges aside and insist on the course of action it likes.

Clear as daylight. But two weeks ago, Apostol already had the presidente for the illegal midnight transfer. "We are the jailer so we can decide where to detain a convicted criminal," Apostol said then. If the President ordered the transfer, he blithely added, the courts wouldn't be able to do anything except "cite the executive department for contempt."

(We have a better suggestion: The Supreme Court can disbar any lawyer who openly mocks the judiciary's unreservedly limited capacity to enforce its rules.)

Apostol's advice—and the outrageous rationalization offered by Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno and Undersecretary Marius Corpus, who effected Smith's transfer, that the move was in fact in compliance with Pozon's order—betrays the true character of the Arroyo administration. It prizes power over reason, the politics of convenience over the rule of law.

It is this same administration which sought to curtail civil liberties through Presidential Proclamation 1017, cut the country's storied legacy of free assembly short through the calibrated preemptive response policy, place public officials beyond the reach of accountability through Executive Order 464—and make a mockery of the Commission's direct democracy provisions by sponsoring a "people's" initiative. (All four actions, for different reasons, have since been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.)

The same spirit of expediency animates other initiatives that will forever be associated with this administration, such as the "presidential questions" sleight of hand that spoofed the first impeachment complaint against the President. They are all marked by the same attitude to law: What is legal is what we can get away with.

This is not the rule of law, but rapist's justice.

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## They all want so much to continue living

AS I SEE IT

*Neal H. Cruz*

HERE'S WISHING EVERYBODY—AND I mean everybody—a happy New Year!

I know your wishes now like we begin the cycle again. And for me, there is an honest symbolism in the idea that we have to finish one cycle.

There are our young like trees in my front yard (there's another bigger, older one in the back yard) and they should have leaves with purples and oranges blooming every summer. I was expecting them to be in bloom in the first week of the last supreme court "blitzkrieg" ushered before Christmas.

As the typhoons raged around us, I was looking out the window to the trees. There is a huge one that I planted when I was in grade one! I was worried that it would topple on to the house. But luckily, the direction of the wind was from behind the house. Thus the whole tree was shielded somewhat. But the trees, however, were bereft of even the full leaves of the wind. I could see their branches bowing and swaying to the wind, and the leaves furiously being blown away, but I was hoping that would weather the storm, literally.

Then there was a lull in the wind, and when I looked again, there they were: flat across the street, the tips of the branches draped over the fence of the house across. "Oops, there they go!" I said. They looked like bizarre branches of an Alzheimer's tree, desperately reaching to the blessing wind. I thought that was the end of those little trees.

Not quite. The maintenance workers came right away when the wind died down and cut the branches off to a level that was more manageable. After the last branch was cut off, the new trunks suddenly stood again like groggy boxers at the count of nine. When the weight of the lacerated land items removed, the tension of the roots still anchored in the ground made them and pulled the trunks upright. The workers jumped away in surprise, laughing at the trees' fighting spirit.

Ten days the trunks stood there like headless scarecrows. Then they burst into sprouted out by the rubber. Then one day I noticed that buds pointing out of the tips. Every day, more buds

THERE'S THE RUB

*Conrado de Quiros*

sprouted into leaves, a particular medium shape shaped like a "U" selling everything from Tiffany of the Isa Pineda et al. to various punk paraphernalia. And, the trees insisted to richer and richer, "I can't imagine a world without them." Now, I can't imagine a world without them, either. I'm glad they thought I believe "the Kaiapo's version of Beethoven's Ninth was as near to heaven as you could get on earth. A world without music is the useful old life, as least as I know it.

And I'm sure the world will always have a special place in my heart.

Thus the British Royal Mail has named the Beatles to its postage stamps it will put that. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think certain four-of-a-kind stamps to their Majesty. The Royal is surely done fully united in the Beatles' case. I don't know of any group, mostly for decades to mount, that still sounds as contemporary today as they did during their time. That is the greatest testament to the Beatles' genius, whether it's their tunes, or brightened, or granting the mail, that one is favored in serious generations upon from across borders, across time apart from native space. I'm never ceased to be amazed that the current day generation is just as "No Name Jim" as my Beatles nights as I was "largely of the 20s and before and not my generation.

When I was growing up in the '50s, the songs of Frank Sinatra, or Nelson Eddy, those of Rosemary Clooney et al. Did not have that kind of effect on us. We then were only two or three decades removed from us. For all practical purposes, they might as well have been a century ago. The Beatles are five generations removed from this time, yet my own kids and their friends know the Beatles' songs as well as I. Time Magazine's panel of judges was right to

## Stamped

punk lexicon, a particular stylism that's shaped like a "U" selling everything from Tiffany of the Isa Pineda et al. to various punk paraphernalia. And, the trees insisted to richer and richer, "I can't imagine a world without them." Now, I can't imagine a world without them, either. I'm glad they thought I believe "the Kaiapo's version of Beethoven's Ninth was as near to heaven as you could get on earth. A world without music is the useful old life, at least as I know it.

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punk lexicon McCartney on the more influential songwriters of the 20th century, beating even Cole Porter and the Gershwin brothers.

I'm not sure if I'm the only Beatles fanatic in the market, "Love," which consists of Beatles songs arranged by George Martin originally for the legendary Cirque du Soleil. Anyway, of course, is the "Hey" music, the fellow who made the Beatles' music sound so good. Martin is the one who made the Beatles' songs sound so good. Martin is the one who made the Beatles' songs sound so good. Martin is the one who made the Beatles' songs

# Constitutional Convention in 2007?

THE MOVEMENT TOWARD CHARTER CHANGE refuses to die. But what Charter change needs a not spent but careful deliberation in an atmosphere of trust and respect. If we have to face it, the crucial questions to ask are: What changes must be made? How do we achieve the changes? And when should they be made? All these questions are intimately linked with each other.

The best way to achieved change includes not reformists, or through Congress as a constituent assembly, or through a constitutional convention. Initiative and referendum is very limited in its usefulness. It can be used only for single changes of individual provisions which do not affect other provisions.

The basically Congress as a constituent assembly or a constitutional convention has the authority to formulate and propose minor and major changes. But there are important differences between Congress as constituent assembly and a constitutional convention. I would suggest that if the issue is a radical change in the constitutional structure, such as a shift to a parliamentary-federal form of government, the task of evaluating or formulating such a change should be entrusted to a study by a constitutional convention. Minor changes, and even important changes, but which do not involve a radical change in the structure of government, can be sought through Congress as a constituent assembly. But those latter kind of changes do not have to be done in one full swoop. They can be attended to gradually over the years.

Collectively, they can be changed being fundamental changes. Why? The reason is that there is the shift to a unicameral parliamentary form of government. It is losing out that separation of powers and checks and balances under a presidential system have become outmoded. But the fact that the Senate has stood up to the tremendous power of the executive is proof that separation of powers and checks and balances are alive. At least the fact that the Supreme Court has acted in general against the political departments.

It is also being said that separation of powers results in unnecessary gridlocks. But separation of powers was never meant to be principle as an measure for efficiency; it has mainly been meant for the prevention of tyranny. That function is still being performed, to the dismay of those who want more speed, more efficiency. The constitution cannot be provisional efficiency is the ultimate consideration. Most of the serious problems we have now can be alleviated or solved by wise and well-implemented administrative process.

It is parliamentary system really the solution? We have been good so far. It is true it is the will the current House of Representatives, the principal advocate of a parliamentary system, has dramatically behaved. We are not particularly prepared for a parliamentary system that clearly satisfies our behavior and conditions.

Is there really an urgent need to review the unconstitutional economic policies of the Constitution? If there is, this is something that can be done more conveniently by Congress as a constituent assembly. But even now we have learned to deal with these issues without impossible. Moreover, there is as much that the administrative process can do for the economic provisions without altering the Constitution. The bigger obstacle is unwise to use the Constitution for the bureaucracy. But the bureaucracy is not the only one that can be largely a problem for the administrative process.

Are the Charter advocates saying that constitutional reform will solve the corruption problem? But corruption is predominantly an administrative problem. It is not solved by changing constitutional rules but by implementing existing rules and imposition sanctions of political will. We will not find solutions to constitutional reform if we do not have the political will to implement administrative and criminal laws—as even just the simple traffic laws.

Should we not embark on a constitutional convention?

We must face the reality that a large segment of the population, rightly or wrongly has been conditioned to expect constitutional reform soon. This cannot be ignored. It can, however, be dealt with through the constitutional provision which authorizes Congress to present the question to the people themselves in a plebiscite for the purpose. The Constitution says: "The Congress may ..."

In a majority vote, submit to the electorate the question of calling such a [constitutional] convention." This can coincide with the May 2007 elections.

# School feeding

"BE CAREFUL OF WHAT YOU DESIRE YOU MIGHT GET what you wish for."

In 2004, the Department of Education proposed a 10-year budget plan including for the foundation for a more optimal multi-year budgeting for the public school system. That study concluded that the national government should spend 8 to 9 percent more each year for education—not 1 to 2 percent—to address problems in shortages, shortages and to improve the overall education performance to the extent. That 8 to 9 percent translates into an additional 99 billion to P1.8 billion per year.

**COMMENTARY**

*Jesse Miguel Luz*

In 2006, the DepEd proposed a P119.1 billion budget—an increase of P9.1 billion, including P1.8 billion for school feeding. That budget was not passed into law. Instead the DepEd had to live with an increased P112 billion budget of 2005.

To make up for lost ground, the DepEd has been given a budget of P134 billion for 2007—an increase of P22 billion over the 2006 allocation. The DepEd should be happy; it is getting more than its share of the pie.

Well, yes and no. Yes, because on paper, education spending will go up appreciably. No, because it opens up areas of tremendous waste for the national government. School feeding is a case in point.

The 2007 DepEd budget includes a proposed P4.81 billion "school feeding" line item. But this forty of "school feeding" is actually a collection of seven projects. The label obscures the project's real intent.

First, some facts about the need for school feeding:

36 percent of all pupils aged 6-12 years (Grades 1-6) are underweight or "underheight" (a form of under- or malnutrition).

But every 100 Grade 1 pupils, only 61 will likely finish Grade 6. Thus 39 that drops from school are for many reasons, the most prominent of which being poor health and malnutrition.

There is a strong correlation between poor nutrition and the dropout incidence, and school feeding is the correct intervention to try to keep kids in school—particularly due to 6- to 8-year-old Grades 1-3 pupils where the dropout rate is highest.

In 2004, the Social Weather Stations reported higher incidents of hunger in the country. The administration responded by narrowing the DepEd school feeding program into a rice distribution project, "pilot-tested" in certain districts in Metro Manila, Cavite and Bicol.

Pupils in Grades 1 and 2 in participating schools received a kilo of rice each day for twenty consecutive. Total cost: a half-month period (December 2004 to March 2005) at a cost of P200 million; the project was proclaimed an overwhelming success despite the misgivings of the DepEd. Those misgivings were valid in a DepEd report to then Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman.

**What went wrong? The DepEd report spoke of the following:**

First, rice was procured by the National Food Authority through a negotiated contract. In the first month, the rice was first classified vitamin E. In the succeeding months, the quality of rice deteriorated significantly. By the project's end, the rice was yellowish and smelly.

Second, the NFA initially delivered rice on a weekly basis, pre-packed in one-kilo bags ready for distribution. By the second month, however, the NFA was dropping off rice at schools on a monthly basis in sacks, not pre-packed.

Classroom space had to be made to store the sacks of rice, and this aggravated the classroom shortage problem. Third, the assorted rice brought with it a problem of pests.

Furthermore, instead of concentrating on classroom cooking and preparation, the teachers spent their time replenishing rice.

Other issues cropped up: When a child is absent, could parents come and claim the rice? Could principals refuse to give rice that rice to parents? When there is unclaimed rice, can teachers take it for themselves? The answers may be obvious, but in a political project like this, does it matter?

Having judged the pilot project a success despite the DepEd's misgivings, the DepEd proposed to scale it up into a nationwide program. This in 2007, every public elementary school became a rice distribution point. But rice distribution is closely neither the manner nor the mission of the public education system.

Other school feeding targets the more underweighted children specifically the under-nutrition and not malnourished to meet the rigors of formal schooling. Rice distribution is an inch generalizer. When rice meets the flour, one size allotment imagine a secondary student where a good part of that rice will be issued to get for the other food items needed by the family. (The DepEd—as certain districts—reported this.) When all members of the family share the rice, will the very young children get their fair share?

The 2007 DepEd budget will the significantly because the DepEd did to job convincing policymakers that we aren't spending enough on education. But what we are seeing now is that the increase, or a sizeable chunk of its budget, is going to be used not for education purposes.

That is why we assume that the amount goes into the school system, the increase is moving in ratings it for classroom construction. What happens close to the school feeding program?

The DepEd formula was always much simpler: Every public elementary school should have its parents association given the school gardens to supplement the school feeding contributions of rice, noodles, fish and/or milkfish. This setup, we assume, P4.81 billion line original amount proposed by the DepEd would be required for some 37,000 public elementary schools.

Forget the distribution through schools. It is prone to corruption and it will take teachers away from teaching. In a system that needs to stay focused on delivering quality education, let's assure the students the problem that goes with rice distribution. And let's work with smaller budgets if it means doing away with waste.

What about the hunger situation? That is a reflection of poverty and the answer is economic opportunity, jobs or work, not welfare, certainly not the handouts through schools.

*Jesse Miguel Luz is president of the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction and was an education undersecretary for finance and administration from December 2002 to April 2006.*

# Containment, not appeasement

AMERICA AND THE WORLD ARE WATCHING whether the Bush administration will adopt the Iraq Study Group's recommendations for an exit strategy from Iraq. This is the most pressing international question. But America's leaders should also look ahead to the next phase: a containment strategy for Iraq and the Middle East, one grounded on a viable national security strategy for the 21st century. That strategy is constitutional.

In the run-up to the Iraq invasion, Bush representatives made much of an obsolete Cold War history, one: He pulled out the weapons inspectors and opted for preemptive war. He was portrayed as facing down a new Hitler with Churchillian resolve, and the advocates of nonviolent means as cowardly appeasers. Now we know for sure that the containment regime worked. Saddam Hussein's Iraq was in no position to threaten anyone, let alone the United States.

This was not the first time that containment—a strategy devised by George Kennan, the director of the U.S. State Department's Policy Planning Staff under President Harry Truman, in response to the Soviet Union after World War II—has been reduced to appeasement. In the 1952 presidential election campaign, Dwight Eisenhower and his former secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, made containment a dirty word.

Fortunately, once in office, Eisenhower had the sense to work with containment in Europe, continuing a policy that is widely credited for winning the Cold War. But containment suffered a new misnomer—applied much advice—as constitutional during the Dukan missile crisis saved the world from nuclear war.

Containment's goal was to prevent Soviet expansionism and military adventurism. Its main ingredients were military deterrence and economic containment. In long as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics did not wage a military attack, containment's reliance on economic sanctions and carrots, competition within the world communist movement, intelligence operations and diplomacy will the eventual collapse of communist domination would guarantee security. Human

**WORLD VIEW**

*Ian Shapiro*

rights, the dysfunctional features of the Soviet system, and its own intervention internationally would lead us to victory.

When containment was abandoned, America ran into a high price. The Eisenhower administration supplied Iran's elected government in 1953, believing that it was in the interest of the West. It responded. Shah they installed was always easy in the Islamic revolution in 1979, there was made comparable errors in Guatemala and elsewhere in Latin America.

Obviously, not America's costliest departure from containment was the Vietnam War. As Kennan explained, where America goes to war over something less than a vital interest, the adversary—for whom that interest are at stake—will fight long after the war has become too unpopular at home to sustain. Bush has replicated this mistake in Iraq.

Containment is hardly a relic of the Cold War. It worked against Libya, leading Muammar Gaddafi in the late 1990s to stop sponsoring terrorism, take over the Lockerbie bombers for trial, and pay compensation to Britain and France for the 1988 Lybia and terrorist activities. Containment against Libya was not appeasement. It should have been the model in Iraq, as it now should be the model in Iran. Instead, the defenders of the contemporary equivalents of "rollback" advocate invading Iran because of its developing nuclear weapons. This makes about as much sense as it would to attack China in the 1950s.

One of Kennan's great insights was that America is well served by conflicts among its adversaries. Its containment from rise in Yugoslavia as an internal challenge to Moscow's hegemony was why it helped others wreak violence.

This history is not on the Bush administration. It mistakenly alienated Iran in 2002 (when moderates had the upper hand there and were cooperating in Afghanistan), and eventual decades of US policy by insisting that any missile that achievement from acquiring would "redress to the ground" in the view Bank. The administration seems keen on herding adversaries together—smothering instead Washington's "clash of civilizations" dynamic into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Containment is not appeasement. It should work in every case to the extent that economic sanctions, and that the best way to spread democracy is to demonstrate its superiority. Fostering democracy down people's throats is self-defeating. Just as it produced a potent failure of containment and into Afghanistan, the Southeast Asia and Latin America, it is now producing a similar combination of radical Islam and anti-American antipathies across the Middle East.

Terrorism groups can be minimized if there are doing more to address "defenders of the flank doctrine claim that this is impossible when they operate out of failed states that cannot police their borders. But, given that the flank doctrine has compounded the failed-state problem, that is a bogus argument.

To bring the containment regime against terrorism emanating from the Middle East, a duty for American diplomats from Iraq must be met. There is no other way to restore the widespread perception across the region that the US has imperial ambitions. This entails a willingness to place the resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict at the center of America's foreign policy agenda. America must push for a solution that can garner the support of significant majorities of all the peoples involved, not a default policy that the Middle-East regime. That is the worst means of protecting and promoting democracy. Project Syndicate

*Ian Shapiro is professor of Political Science at Yale University and author of the forthcoming book "Containment: Rebuilding a Strategy Against Global Terror."*

# 'Dancing lessons' from Ramon Obusan

THE BOOK ABOUT NATIONAL ARTIST RAMON Obusan's death shocked me. I met and talked to him sometime ago and he made a great impact on me.

How high do we regard national artists? Intel has anyone ever tried to look inside the minds of these individuals? A group of friends and I happened to ask him on the thinking of this fashion of Artes for Dance.

To have a close acquaintance, we had to interview Obusan on video. We had done our research, we were all ready with our questions and we thought we were prepared. But we were in for a lively discussion with him. We started off by asking him about the significance between his acquired diploma and his lifetime work, about his childhood before he was raised up.

Obusan's answers were quite interesting, giving us a lot of insights into the kind of life he lived—the never-heard-of photos in the Philippines he had gone to in "search" of native dances: how he would go days without food, the others he had interviewed with; the lessons he walked through to get to the U.S.; the hardships he went through; and in fact, he found them boring. Then, all of a sudden, he ordered us to stop the tape and blasted out, "Do you all really 10 students? Your questions can all be found in the library of your school and especially in the reading section of the CCP. Why did you waste your time and mine to ask these stupid questions? Have you really prepared for this? Is this the education that UP is teaching nowadays?"

We were so in call at that he wanted a livelier and more exciting conversation. We were embarrassed, of course. This was a well-respected artist schooling us, after all, and we couldn't say a word in response. Finally, after what seemed to be an eternity of silence, I mean I regretted asking him: "Is

**FEATURE**

*John Kristoffer B. Sulla*

in honor this Obusan, I find what you're doing to be quite boring. It's not something I would want my time on. But why do you continue to bring those ladies to the dances in the urban stage? What kind you?"

After getting a compliment for my "good question," he started to talk about the secret of having a "passion" for one's work or calling. He said that it's the one driving force that could get you anywhere you want to go. Having the passion—the heart—is everything. It will push you to have ability, something you will want to do all the time.

Obusan was a lover of people and that's one reason he took up anthropology in UP during his college years. He loved freedom of expression. He loved moving the simple gestures of people when they talk to each other, why they sometimes limit up when thinking, which their chin when dancing, or tap their fingers when impatient. The art is expressing and it's expression itself. Real art is beauty. "Artists," he said to us, "are one of the ones that best expressed people's inner feelings.

He taught us about those very important lessons that we could learn from the life of dancing: "Discipline, discipline and discipline!"

He said that "Dance is even more disciplined than military training. You must not succeed in the military, everything is in routines or cadence, and each time your commander wants you to make some of minor movement, it contributed it must be done. In a dance, however, everything is memorized and practiced before rehearsal."

He explained to us the strict discipline in changing from costume to costume in less than a minute, the cues required for the performers to know, and the strict force a dancer needs to have to perform well.

"Obusan was, yes, an artist, but what was a artist who does not have "passion" for his conceptions? The dancers of the Philippines can tell you that Filipinos have long expressed the glory and love of country through various art forms. While schools are mainly occupied with the past and the future, the ones around the hearts and souls of people.

Obusan did not ask for the National Artist Award. He was just a simple artist who loved the Philippines and its people. He was creating a different kind of dance, he did it, and I guess he had one of the most beautiful minds.

None of his deeds was "treated" to me as I'm the morning of Dec. 31 by Sofie, one of my group mates. She said the funeral artist was on national news, the one cited. It took a while before the thought sank in. I guess I just couldn't believe how easily a lifetime of work, dedication and love could accomplish.

The good thing is that it has not ended, after all it has many legacies. Many artists in this country opine to have their dances recognized, thanks to Obusan and the Ramon Obusan Folkloric Group (ROFG).

Like me, many people may not be able to understand the dances, the ethics and the poses intended for the dances, but surely today no one questions that Obusan shared with his students.

*John Kristoffer B. Sulla is a tourism student at the University of the Philippines, Diliman.*

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# Let's follow Brazil's example

YOUR NEWS REPORT ON THE supposed "widening of fuel prices" next year (PDI, 12/25/06) was heartening. But for the Bicolnon, soundness only a 3-percent reduction in diesel engine emissions seems to put emphasis.

Why limit the use of biofuel? Read here...more specifically the carbon dioxide emitted from its use—aside from protecting the world's environment and causing the thinning of the world's atmosphere, also causes many ailments.

Why can't we follow the example of Brazil? That South American country simply refused to be swayed when oil prices soared in 1979. In response, Brazil used its sugar lands and industry to produce ethanol and since then, it has become the world's No. 1 ethanol producer.

The Philippines has thousands upon thousands of acres of land lying idle which could otherwise be put to good use by planting biofuel-producing plants. One jatropha hectare can be planted by the Department of Agriculture and Technology to plant and produce biofuels, which are so badly needed now only by the Philippines but all of the world's oil-producing countries.

Let's stop using dirty fuel as soon as we can, and let's make a quick shift to those fuel like ethanol and biodiesel. If the government will really help its cause for developing, we can free ourselves from the shackles of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and the oppressive dirty fuel. And we will surely not commit progressive Philippines.

—HERNADINE SALTOS,
12 K-12 Fernadian Homes,
East Drive, Antonio, Barkikina City

## Wage increase equals higher unemployment rate

THE GOVERNMENT WILL RAISE the minimum wage to go up by P125, a much wage level, businesses will lay-off people.

The problem with a high minimum wage is that the marginally productive employees of the latest hired business most especially. The only ones who will benefit from this wage increase will be the store workers.

Business has always paid productive workers well. This wage increase will only succeed in increasing the unemployment rate and further encourage our workers to go overseas.

—GUS COOD,
11 New Aurora St.,
Quezon City 1112

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*Please include in letter to the editor any requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.*

## LETTERS

## Idolized uncle turned bully

THIS IS UNFORTUNATE. JUAN de la Cruz has always been loyal to Uncle Sam, fighting side by side with him on the battlefield. Every war the latter had been in—whether as defender or bully. Now Uncle Sam sees around and begins bullying Juan as well. Isn't it?

No one of his soldiers who has been found guilty of raping a daughter of Juan. It's like Uncle Sam is telling Juan: "We don't really need you anymore, you and your land. So, much less since we have you might find there first. To hell with your laws, your institutions has come to an end."

I still don't want to believe that the uncle I once idolized is, after all, a monster. But here he is, waving ways on all fronts and terminating even his most loyal dog.

I say, send US Master Louis Cpl. Daniel Smith to Mississippi whom criminal indeed.

—JOSE BACALLEL,
j_bacallel@hotmail.com

## Who could be the better change agent?

I'M REACTING TO TINO CHUAIDO of North Triangle where he raised the question as to who, between President Macapagal-Arroyo and Manny Pacman Pacquiao, would make for a more effective change agent for our country. (PDI, 12/20/06).

Personally, I believe neither one of them will do. And before I repeat that word, old cliché about how change comes from within each one of us, I would like to point out that in my view, Mr. Pilipinas, are being too hands on ourselves by suggesting that we need a tentative character overhaul to get ourselves out of the dismal rut our country is in.

Isn't this, after all, what we are telling ourselves as a nation: The reason for our impasse, for poverty, for political instability is the ugly, inner beast in our character. If we accept that this ugly character is the root of all evil in this country, then there is no hope for us all. Mr. Arroyo and Pacman combined can't do much about it.

But there is hope. The reality is that every ugly people accused in life. I have seen that happen and continue to happen. All I can say is, they're your beautiful people because they've now succeeded in finding some measure of peace with having an ugly or beautiful character. All people have the capacity to build great societies. But you cannot build a great society by telling yourself that you're a bunch of ugly people. You have a beautiful people about your character. And that's exactly what this call for "national values transformation" suggests. And it starts from one's self—inside.

If we are to build a great country, we must begin to accept who we are—demand it as we, ugly or beautiful. That is the first step. And after known value the second step is building, every step it is step to the unknown, requiring tremendous amount of self-belief.

Mr. Arroyo should not create "Task Force Ugly" to be headed by Mr. Pacman. Instead, she should by calling for "values transformation," tell like Charter change. It sounds good but, at the end of the day it's not a real solution to our country's problems. Mr. Arroyo should just focus on good governance. As for Pacman, he should stick to boxing. He should not even consider a career in politics, not even his hiccup of one.

As for the rest of us, well, let's just have a happy New Year! Forget winning. Keep smiling. And if anyone spoils our holiday by telling us about values transformation, just tell him: "Shut up. Work hard. Feed your family. Be happy."

—JOSE MICHAEL CRUZ,
juan_miguelito@yahoo.com

## Wage increase equals higher unemployment rate

THE GOVERNMENT WILL RAISE the minimum wage to go up by P125, a much wage level, businesses will lay-off people.

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—GUS COOD,
11 New Aurora St.,
Quezon City 1112

## Jose Rizal's imprints on the Philippine Revolution

IN HIS DEC. 23 COLUMN, MANUEL L. Quezon III counters his review of Harold Augenbraum's excellent English translations of Jose Rizal's "Noli Me Tangere" with a plug for a misfortune biography of Rizal by Javier de Pedro. A member of the Opus Dei, he Pedro was also the author of "Rizal: Victim of Conspiracy" by The Catholic Church in the Philippines had, after all, banned "Noli Me Tangere" and burned copies of it for long, not first and anti-government.

Quezon's second shot rests on De Pedro's use Rizal as a "patriot," the phrase doesn't see him as a "nationalist." De Pedro is merely serving in asserting that to the "Noli," Rizal did not treat our country as a "nation" under colonial bondage. He noted, the Spanish Elias, after complaining of the numerous brutalities and cruelties of the friars and the Spanish government, appealed to them, the "feudal" peasantries, to "take up the cudgels" because, some of people, don't ignore their wrongs, be as intolerable as the rest, give them the concepts of what one calls a nation!"

In that part of the novel, there's still "Filipinos" but "Indios" as in "El Filibusterismo," Our sequel to the "Noli," Rizal's incomprehensible into Minimal, the sub-title and revolutionary. Through Basilio, another victim of the friar cruelties, Simoun gives us hints of the Filipinos' capacity for Christ-like sacrifice and Quixote heroicnesses, and engages are igniting against the colonial rule.

Contemporaries of Rizal, like Andres Bonifacio, a member of Rizal's revolutionary La Liga Filipina, journeyed by unexpected Rizal's "Noli" and "Fili," together with his other writings, as a call for revolution, and as they formed the foundations. The disappearance since Rizal's name as a rallying cry for the nationalistic revolutionists.

In his definitive biography of Rizal, titled "Rizal: Filipino Nationalist and Patriot," member Kalaklaan, Benito Cosme, wrote: "The awakening of Jose Rizal to the concept of nationalism, and the demand for independence from the colonial powers—the Asian independence movements...began in the Philippine islands with the publication of Rizal's 'Noli Me Tangere' in 1887. From that date till 1901, the Philippines provided the main scene of the movement, the commercial source of which was not yet separated."

One hundred ten years after his execution, Rizal remains controversial, despite the common son's undeniable veneration of him, because of the Catholic Church's and the ruling elites' overdose of his nationalistic and anti-colonial literary his teachings and writings. The Rizal cure, enacted through the efforts of nationalists Claro M. Recto and Jose P. Laurel, is now practically a dead law, as Rizal courses on the unexpurgated writings have been suppressed by both public and private (sectarian) schools. The colonial mentality, as shown by our government's position on the Rizal cure case, persists.

—MARCELO F. AL-RAHIM,
spokesman, Moroland for
Truth in History (MOTH),
mfalrahim@yahoo.com

## The national hero would have been proud of him

I COULD NOT HELP BUT FEEL SAD, irate and elusive after reading Jose Miguel Arguelles' "Branding Darlimar" (PDI, 12/31/06) outburst as his father's tragic failure to understand his son's suffering and requirements, instead an honoring them a young Filipino would be so preoccupied to risk parental and even social disapproval.

I, too, feel overtime for over 20 years, and there I found out there is no place like home. I hope that before coming time will come when social justice will lead our troubled society's planned economic budget. I hope that parents will stop viewing their children as a commercial enterprise and allow them the freedom to be themselves and to be happy and fulfilled before own rights.

Would that there were more young people like Arguelles. His heart is in the right place.

—A. HERNANDEZ,
bbb113444@yahoo.com

## Meralco's poor coordination system

I AM WRITING TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THE poor service of Meralco, a public utility firm.

Our electric power was taken last Dec. 14 at 3 a.m. We reported the matter to the Meralco Caloocan branch, with the proper supporting documents from the police, barangay office, etc., in the morning of Dec. 15. Because it was a Friday, we didn't really expect Meralco to send us the manager until the following Monday.

On Monday, Dec. 18, a team of Meralco representatives came but did not install a new meter. The reason? There was a power outage in Caloocan. Of course, we took the explanation to mean that Meralco would install the new meter the next day. But on Dec. 19, no one from Meralco came—the despite three calls to the Meralco call center.

On Dec. 20, I called Meralco again, this time directly to the Caloocan branch. I was advised that it was the Batasan-area meeting of the that usually saw lowers, the Caloocan branch only—which I did. Lots of problems to deal with at the office. One appointed to have the Batasan-area office send him be informed. I was told by the Caloocan branch that it would be a follow up my report. In good faith, we thought that the new meter would be installed that day. Lunch came but still there was no Meralco meter. I called Meralco's call center once more, but to no avail.

On Dec. 21, my wife got the email sequence—not new meters had been scheduled for installation. I have a 6-month-old baby in our house. We have to use candles at night.

Why a Meralco so insensitive and unfeeling?

The call center tells us that the Caloocan branch will attend to us and that branch is not responsible. It is a clear-cut case of irresponsibility to provide us with a meter. But I have no way of contacting the Batasan-area office. And all this is simply for the installation of an electric meter.

I wonder what or how long it would take Meralco if the problem involved a transformer or some serious one. What good is a call center if it cannot help Meralco to attend, within a reasonable time, a consumer's needs? What system of coordination does Meralco have? Please point to a TV commercial about Meralco's Factual service is inefficient?

—DENNIS BACALLEL,
dennis_macallel@yahoo.com

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

# 30 Chinese poachers to face charges

By Norman Bordadora

THIRTY CHINESE FISHERMEN WERE SCHEDuled to arrive in Puerto Princesa the other night to face charges of violating the country's fisheries and environmental laws.

The suspects were arrested in the Tubbataha marine sanctuary on Dec. 21 with some 1,200 pieces of live fish, including the endangered Napoleon wrasse or "humang."

Lawyer Evangeline Sangco of the Tubbataha Management Office said the Chinese poachers were fleeced by a Philippine Navy vessel after more than a week of being held by suspected Tubbataha.

"Not all the fish were released because of the vessel's limited space. There were huge issues according to one of the suspects I talked to," Sangco said in a telephone interview.

Sangco said the remaining fish would be released by 7 a.m. yesterday after being photographed and inventoried for evidence gathering purposes.

### Alarm raised

The World Wide Fund for Nature in the Philippines raised an alarm over the illegal proliferation of Chinese poachers in Philippine seas to catch endangered fish.

Lorenzo Tan, president of WWF-Philippines, said Philippine Coast Guard records showed that only three vessels from China that was accosted by Tubbataha and ranges the week before Christmas, there was another Chinese ship that might contain endangered fish species but was able to evade authorities.

"Where is the Pi Yu 08 today? Does its cargo include Napoleon wrasse—the world's largest coral reef fish species? The New Star is a high concern for locals [suspects that] include this grand fish," Tan told the Inquirer.

### $100 a kilogram

"It is romantic to say, 'Eat Jika se closely marking a hotline for Chinese and it launched rewards Napoleon wrasse reportedly sells for more than $100 a kilogram or Hong Kong consumers," he added.

Tan said the Hui Nan and the Yu Jia were monitored because these were issued permits by Philippine authorities.

Hui Wan, however, was found to have fishing equipment that may have been used to catch "illegal" in the country.

### Without permits

He expressed alarm over Chinese fishing vessels that were not credited to operate in the country.

"How many more Chinese fishing vessels are operating in Philippine waters today without proper permits? How many of these vessels dare to buy or catch fish illegally and deliberately, enabling the final and future users from our own children?" Tan said.

Sangco and environment stakeholders of Palawan on Friday were their own version of the diplomatic note to the Chinese Embassy in Manila, challenging it to allow Philippine laws to be applied to the 29 suspected poachers not found Hui Nan.

### Governor and bishop

Palawan Gov. Joel Reyes and Bishop Pedro Arigo led the local civic and environmentalist stakeholders who asked the Chinese Embassy to refrain from using diplomatic channels to pressure the Philippines into releasing the fishermen.

"We appeal to the [Chinese] government to do its utmost in ensuring compliance with its international obligations in the conservation of the marine environment, particularly by adopting restrictive policy measures on illegal fishing activities of their fishermen in particular and the Philippines in general," the note read.

The Palawan leaders asked the Chinese government "to observe our view that the proper disposition of our fishery resources for [unofficial] impact not only on the people of Palawan but also on the Chinese people."

Finally, we challenge the Chinese government to let justice take its course in the case of the Pi Yu 08 by refraining from undertaking efforts that could be construed as exerting diplomatic pressures that will compromise the due process of law," the Palawan officials and stakeholders said.

# Father, daughter team taking shape in Davao City polls

DAVAO CITY—MINOR ROBERTO Duterte said he wants his daughter Sara as running mate in next year's mayoralty election.

Inviting the Christmas party of the city's village chiefs held at the Grand Mirasol-ng Hotel here on Dec. 26, Duterte said Sara would make a good vice mayor.

But he admitted that he was not sure about the public's response to a father and daughter tandem.

Duterte earlier said he will not allow any member of his family to be involved in "the misery and dirt" brought about by politics.

But he said he changed his mind because he realized that his efforts for the city could go to waste if corrupt politicians would take over city hall.

Duterte said his father—who governed the then undivided Davao province—has left him a leadership that he "could not just bequeath to anybody else, especially to some politicians who have tainted the image of the city."

"I have been running this city alone for the past ninety years and whether I like it or not, I will retire. My father has left me a closed-door and this I performed until the utmost desire to bring the people of Davao only the best," Duterte said.

He said pursuing that leadership should be made with utmost concern.

"I have to be very careful. I am sorry that my efforts for Davao would go to waste but if my daughter will become the next vice mayor, I am always in her guide," Duterte said.

Duterte said he denies the idea of watching out k politicians involved in corruption scandals.

He even named former Mayor Benjamin de Guzman—a former ally—as among politicians he would never watch out k again. De Guzman has announced his intention to run in the vice mayoralty race.

"There will certainly be changes in our government should he [De Guzman] become the next vice mayor. I would rather resign as mayor and surrender my post to him. He has done practically nothing in Davao when he was the mayor... look at Alcad? It is a huge questionable project under his leadership," Duterte said referring to the mothballed multi-million epoxy resins built under De Guzman's administration.

Sara, a lawyer, has refused to comment on his father's announcement.

But Duterte appears to be serious in signing his daughter in running mate that he even commissioned a survey on Sara's acceptability to the public.

Councilor Peter Laviña, who conducted a separate quick survey on Dec. 27, said 35 percent of the 375 respondents asked wanted Sara to be the next vice mayor.

"The issue of confidants here is debatable and relative but given that her family is an old political clan and that she has been exposed to politics all her life, Sara has an advantage over the other hopefuls aside from the fact that she is also a lawyer," Laviña said.

Jeffrey M. Tupas and Theodorne Acuc, Inquirer Mindanao

RISK TAKER
The backyard industry of firecracker manufacturing in many parts of Bulacan has drawn workers such as this man covered with gunpowder as he fills cardboard cylinders with gunpowder in Bocaue town.

# GMA OKs ₱150M for repair of highway in Cordillera

BONTOC, MT. PROVINCE—PRESident Macapagal-Arroyo has allotted another ₱150 million for the improvement of Bontoc highway, the main highway connecting regionlie province, tourist and tourist spots in the Cordillera.

The funds promised by the President in her visit here Thursday would add to the ₱100 million earlier set aside to complete the rehabilitation of the highway's section in this province and came after the World Bank approved additional loans for the project.

Gov. Maximo Dalog said Mr. Arroyo told officials of the province and the Department of Public Works and Highways in attendance the economy of the highway's section that Mr. Ortiz in Bauko town to the capital town of Bontoc.

That section's improvement is the second phase of the elaborate highway rehabilitation project.

The first phase covered the completion of the highway's section from Baguio in Baguio, Benguet, which cost ₱1.2 billion, while the third phase would cover the Bontoc to Banaue (Ifugao) section of the highway.

"The President emphasized the recovering of the highway as her road priority during the briefing, [onward] that the recovering of the road was very important," Dalog told the governors.

He said the World Bank loan cancellation was announced in November during a meeting between Mariano Rigonan, DPWH Cordillera director, and Thomas Killip, representative of the Cordillera affairs.

Dalog said the DPWH officials did not cite the reason for the loan cancellation.

Rigonan, however, said the conversion division of the JP-MEA Cordillera, said the funding withdrawal means that local funds would be used to rehabilitate the highway.

Dalog said the World Bank earlier released ₱700 million for the road project and the funds authorized by the Arroyo to be released next year would help hasten the project's completion.

Dalog and Provincial Board Member Jaime Bugnosen differed on how the ₱100 million earlier set aside for the project would be used.

Bugnosen said the amount should be used for the widening of sections of the highway and the installation of guardrail, which he said followed the JP-MEA original program of work.

The President spent her holidays in Baguio City at The Mansion, the official residence of the President in the summer capital.

From there, the President went on business as usual although took some time off touring various districts in city and neighboring areas.

Officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources were silent on an explosion that rocked a shale mine in La Trinidad regional trading post that Mrs Arroyo was scheduled to visit on Dec. 28.

The blast occurred at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, more damaging goods and glass panes in the area. No one was injured but... Desiree Cabuso with a report from Pinol-Cusaey, Inquirer Northern Luzon

# Lucena firecracker vendors herded in cemetery

FIRECRACKER makers in Bocaue, Bulacan, celebrate the coming of the New Year and an increase in sales.

LUCENA CITY—TO AVOID THE repeat of the deadly fire that occurred a day before the New Year's celebration two years ago, the local government here barred all sellers of firecrackers and pyrotechnics inside the east compound of the still unused public cemetery located in the outskirts of the city.

Senior Supt. Reuben Theodoro Sindac, Lucena police chief, said he had ordered the local police forces to strictly implement the latest ordinance designating the public cemetery as the common selling area of legal New Year's explosives.

"We have to be strict to protect the welfare of the whole city. We can't afford to be complacent when what we've stakes are people's lives and properties," Sindac said.

Past noon of Dec. 31, 2006, a resident lit up a firecracker in her backyard but instead of shooting up, the rocket made a horizontal turn and landed on a pile of pyrotechnics inside a store near the public market.

The rockets set off a massive explosion and caused a fire that burned nine other establishments.

At least 13 persons were killed in the blaze, millions of pesos worth of property were destroyed.

After the fire, the local government passed an ordinance designating the still unused cemetery in the secluded corner of Barangay Market View as the common area for all local handlers of New Year's firecrackers and pyrotechnics, which were formerly openly selling their dangerous products in the vicinity of the public market in the crowded part of the city.

Sindac said the local police would also implement the ban on the use of "lunga," an improvised cannon fashioned out of a PVC pipe popularly used by kids.

"It's a national order from Camp Crame," he said.

PNP chief Director General Oscar C. Calderon also announced the order in a message to Luzon police directors during the turnover of the Bicol regional command from Chief Supt. Victor S. Ibero to Chief Supt. Ricardo L. Wells in on Thursday.

Calderon also appealed to local executives to issue similar orders to ban "lunga" in their areas of jurisdiction.

According to Health Secretary Romulo Duque II, the use of "lunga" and picric, another type of firecracker, made up almost 30 per cent of the cause of the 171 fireworks-related accidents last year.

John Hilario, the lone maker of PVC-made cannons here, said the product was safer compared to common firecrackers like "kwitang," "triangulo," and many other similar explosives.

"I've already sold plenty of my products but no one has returned to complain that he was hurt or injured. I took extra efforts to fill all the safety requirements to make it safe for the users. But if the user is careless, that's another matter," he said.

However, he said, he would stick by the police order.

"Anyway, I've already recouped my small investment and already made a little profit," Almario said. Belyn C. Dizilla-Uy, Inquirer Southern Luzon

IMAGES 2006

# From across the seas, relief and remittances coax better-than-expected 5.5% growth

## OVERSEAS REMITTANCES KEEP THE ECONOMY AFLOAT

Over $12 billion in overseas dollar remittances (and possibly 50 percent more coming in through unofficial channels) helped strengthen the peso, allowed government to retire some of its foreign debt and pushed economic growth from 5.1 percent in 2005 to 5.5 percent last year. A robust stock market, increased electronics exports, eligible's improved agriculture and additional investments in mining also offset the generally dismal performance of trade, industry and tourism.

Despite want, over a million left for abroad, authorities reported 7.3 percent unemployment, down from over 10 percent three years ago. But a record high of over a million Filipinos joined Overnight Our Misery Aquino International Airport in most lucrative jobs abroad.

## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Somehow, Pinoys cope. As gasoline prices soared in the first half of the year, scooter sales rose 20 percent. Divisoria's 168 mall, walled with cheap imports from China, has become a popular shopping area.

## TXT-ALL-U-CAN

Police nagged off and on battles with cell phone thieves, but price hunting was intense mainstream Manila's load as the "texting capital of the world." National Telecommunications Commission estimates 350 million text messages are sent daily from over 30 million cellular phone subscribers.

IMAGES 2006

# Inspirations

RONALYN ALCANID

RONNY SARDUCE

JIMMY DE JUNG

LUAN TIPON

The victories of boxer Manny Pacquiao, billiards underdog Ronnie Alcano and bowler Biboy Rivera provided hope and cheers for the nation's sagging spirit. At the Asian Games in Doha, the team managed to win four golds, its best performance in over three decades. Three conquering Filipino mountaineers also planted the Philippine flag on the summit of Mt. Everest.

IMAGES 2006

# China roars: New prosperity in the region

## ASIA ASCENDANT

Despite growing world uncertainty China and India remained in roar with spectacular double-digit growth, promising new prosperity in the region. Vietnam, which successfully hosted the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) last year, topped out with 8 percent growth.

## CYBERPOPULATION TOPS 1 BILLION

The worldwide number of Internet users surpassed 1 billion at the start of the year—up from only 45M in 1995 and 420M in 2000. Much of current and future Internet user growth is now coming from developing countries such as China, India, Brazil, Russia and Indonesia. According to the Computer Industry Almanac 7.5 million 42 (plus) are members of the borderless world wide web.

IMAGES 2006

# War, terrorism continue to spread tension worldwide

## QUAGMIRE IN IRAQ

Saddam Hussein was executed but US officials were openly conceded that they could not win militarily in Iraq. Almost all crises in the world faced Islamist terror threats, including Cuba, where authorities extended a 30-leader summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in December. From redouter North Korea, a nuclear test explosion increased tension.

SADDAM HUSSEIN

GEORGE W. BUSH

KIM JONG-IL

HOLIDAY SEASON

Marilyn Mejia and son Jon Carlo, 9 months old, ponder their future after receiving bags of relief goods at the PICSperia Center from the Philippine National Red Cross, along with 1,500 families displaced by Supertyphoon "Reming" in Camarines Sur.

# Red Cross pledges 9,000 homes for victims of 'Reming'

PILI, CAMARINES SUR—THE International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) pledged to provide 9,000 new homes to the victims of Supertyphoon "Reming" in the provinces of Albay and Camarines Sur, a representative said here Friday.

Allan Pigge, representative of the IFRC, said in a press conference here that 7,000 housing units in this province and 2,000 housing units to Albay will be provided.

Without citing figures of the cost of each housing unit, Pigge said that galvanized iron sheets, wood, nails and other construction materials will be delivered to families who lost their homes.

Pigge said the destruction wrought by Reming in Camarines Sur was more extensive in Camarines Sur than in Albay but that there were more deaths recorded in Albay.

Gov. Luis Raymund Villafuerte, who has been coordinating with the Philippine National Red Cross, admits the supertyphoon struck, said that the IFRC's pledge would cover some 50 percent of the number of families who lost their homes here.

Villafuerte said Reming destroyed more than 177,822 homes all over the province, 55 percent of school buildings estimated at P1.6 billion and several public health clinics.

The governor said the provincial government has been continuously appealing to local and international humanitarian organizations to help in the rehabilitation of the province.

"Almost a month after the devastation, there is still so much that needed response. I am most concerned that many people may be dying," Villafuerte lamented.

He said he is very grateful that the IFRC has responded in the call of the provincial government after its representative saw the extent of destruction in this province.

Pigge also pledged to help rebuild several health clinics destroyed by Reming in Camarines Sur.

On Friday, the IFRC distributed relief goods donated by the Philip Morris Co., United States and other donors to 7,500 families, enough to sustain them for two weeks. —Joel Locsin del Ar, Inquirer Southern Luzon

# Palparan formula seen in new anti-Red plan

By Tonyets Crispe
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Dylan Ramsey Leyte II, the governor's nine-month-old security master plan aimed at defeating communist insurgency by 2010, has adopted the "urban militarization" strategy of a former Army general accused of killing political activists, according to headquarters party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano.

The institutionalization of the strategy employed by retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan would make the campaign "more brutal, fascist and murderous," said Mariano, a member of the House committees on national defense and human rights, in a statement here.

The plan also retained Palparan's supposed use of "death squads," he said but without stating how these concepts were tried in the new plan. He demanded an official inquiry on the new plan.

Palparan, who concluded his career in September this year as commander of the Army's 7th Infantry Division, drawed massive reminding some 500 incidents of extra-judicial killings, disappearances and other forms of human rights violations during his stint in Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog and Visayas regions since 1999. He has not been charged in courts.

Mariano said it was in Central Luzon where Palparan "experimented with bringing counter-insurgency to the urban centers, culminating in the process San Fernando and Angeles cities in Pampanga, San Jose City in Nueva Ecija, Tarlac City, and Malolos City in Bulacan."

In interviews with the Inquirer, the general then confirmed also fielding special operations teams (SOTs) to urban and rural centers to eliminate the logistical, financial and mass bases of the communist rebels, notably those from the New People's Army.

"You go where the enemy is," he said to explain for his expansion of the theater of war in the region where communist movements in the 1980s and 1970s took roots.

In deploying SOTs, mainly a squad of soldiers, to the barangays, he said he modified the SOT concept originally outlined since 1986 in "Red areas" or guerrilla fronts.

His troops safeguarded the so-called liberated areas by establishing the barangay defense system here.

By the time he retired, he said the military has not officially adopted his brand of SOT, which he claimed to have been effective because it liberalized not less than 20 towns and cities in Central Luzon from the influence or control of the rebels.

In a recent interview, Palparan denied that he was serving the government in an unofficial capacity as adviser to the national defense program.

His appointment, either to the National Security Council or Department of Defense, had been put on hold reportedly due to his controversial human rights record.

To Mariano, however, the Palparan design would "consequently bring the political killings to the urban centers, increasing incalculable the level of political killings that will further victimize innocent civilians."

The lawmaker warned that "where Dylan Ramsey Leyte I primarily victimized the peasantry, the Dylan Ramsey Leyte II will victimize anyone."

"Nobody is safe anymore," he said, adding that the first option, began in 2002, had claimed more than 800 victims.

Armed Forces chief of staff, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., said during his visit on Dec. 15 to the Northern Luzon Command in Tarlac City that the first option "succeeded" in reducing the NPA strength from 12,000 in 2002 to 7,000 in 2006.

He denied that the new option would dump down on human rights, saying the concept was mainly about "guarding frontiers" that he called the "arrowheads of communism."

"I look forward to a great 2007, full of optimism that we can finally defeat the threats to national security," he said.

# 22 traders in Albay charged with overpricing

By Ephraim Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—At least 22 business owners in Albay found selling overpriced products after Supertyphoon "Reming" were charged by the Department of Trade and Industry here with violations of the Price Act while 11 others faced charges for selling substandard products.

Aurelyn Blanco, DTI Bicol's regional director, said the 22 business owners sold construction materials and candles at more than 10 percent of the prevailing price.

"After the typhoon, the 33 owners needed 61 galvanized iron sheets, umbrellas, some wire nails and candles but some businessmen took advantage of the huge demand for these commodities," Blanco said.

Archie Mendez, 45, owner of the Associate General Merchandise, one of the candle stores in this city that did not increase its prices, said an increase was not reasonable since factory prices remained the same even after Typhoons "Milenyo," "Reming," and "Seniang."

Prices of candles commonly used by powerless households or barangays, depending on the size, would range from P5.75 to P57 per piece. Mendez said these candles were non-drip and high-quality candles from Cavite.

Demand for candles increased as 86 percent of Albay still remained powerless after Reming destroyed power lines amounting to P186 million, Alex Brahma, general manager of the Albay Electric Cooperative (Aleco), said Friday.

# GMA cools heels in Baguio vacation house

BAGUIO CITY—LOCAL OFFICIALS cited poorly to make President Macapagal-Arroyo smile on Saturday at the presidential Mansion here.

The President led this year's commemoration of Rizal Day at Burnham Park and hosted the ceremonies citing Baguio's outstanding citizens for the year at The Mansion, her official residence in the city.

But none of her guests found Ms Arroyo more excited than usual.

At The Mansion, Councilor Gilberto Teodoro Jr. encouraged the audience to give Ms Arroyo a standing ovation once reports that Philippine stocks had surged to a 10-year high due to her economic policies.

He said these policies were even soon enough for "the economy to break through the doors."

Baguio Rep. Mauricio Domogan cited Ms Arroyo's various achievements this year to deserve cheers. Acting Baguio Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr. echoed the Baguio hymn.

Their efforts managed to make Ms Arroyo beam, at least during the hour-long ceremony.

Reporters also said Ms Arroyo and the members of the First family had kept to themselves since Dec. 26, and the President appeared publicly only to meet with local officials.

She did not schedule media interviews and did not attend a bonfire organized by the Philippine Information Agency (PIA) on Friday night for reporters covering her holiday activities here.

Reporters had been waiting for the homecoming First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo and Mrs. Mirella Sunga-Arroyo.

Reporters, however, did get Mr. Arroyo to say that he was pleased with his wife's economic achievements.

"I'm very proud of her, because look at the economic gains. The peso is very strong. The stock market is back to levels (of 10 years ago)," he said.

But the President, though offering a smile, glided by and quickly pulled Ms Arroyo away from the reporters.

Assistant Secretary Jose Cepeda of the Office of the Press Secretary said Ms Arroyo was not hiding from the media.

"She loves the media. She understands their requirements so her instruction to us was to provide all the information that they would need," Cepeda told the Inquirer on Friday.

A PIA official said Ms Arroyo failed to attend the bonfire due to an impromptu meeting at The Mansion.

People attending the Rizal Day ceremonies at Burnham Park on Saturday also noticed that the President looked subdue.

"But we were happy the rail showed up," said Francisco Valenciosa, a retired teacher.

Valenciosa was among the winners of the "Lucky Rolls" project of the "Sibulo ng Parks" program.

After the rites, she engaged Ms Arroyo in a brief conversation.

"I am here to invest my dollars in the country," Valenciosa told Ms Arroyo.

Philippine-American Jean Cate, 59, was also glad to see Ms Arroyo in Rizal Park. Cate said she met the President in Malacañang last week as part of her tour as the outgoing Miss Universe Filipina.

The event was sponsored by organizations of Filipinos who migrated to the United States. Cate said she was because of the song, "Paradise," which she wrote in honor of the Filipino folk tale longstanding plantation workers.

Reporters said the President kept herself busy here by addressing "issues" during the holidays.

Vincent Cabreza and Dodjie Cabuay, Inquirer Northern Luzon

MID WALK IN THE PARK REALLY

President Macapagal-Arroyo and First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo walk through the gardens of The Mansion, the presidential retreat in Baguio City, yesterday. Although there appears to be a hint of a smile on the President's face, reports out of Baguio said she had appeared taciturn and reminding most of the time she spent in the City of Pines.

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# NEWS

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## Palace pleads for unity in '07

MALACAÑANG SEES 2007 AS A "PIVOTAL year" for the country as it appealed for unity ahead of the national elections in May.

"As the year comes to a close, we have seen the agility and stability of our economy and we are optimistic—as everybody is—that 2007 will be a pivotal year for the Philippines," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

"The coming year will demand greater national unity and consolidation for the sake of sustaining our gains and greater determination and capacity to deliver on the hopes of the people," said Bunye.

Bunye issued the statement a day after Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs Gabriel Claudio said that winning credibility in the May elections was the main goal of the administration.

The Palace cited the growing economic data, specifically the surging peso-and-stock market, as proof that President Macapagal-Arroyo's economic reforms were bearing fruit.

The peso has gained 7.4 percent since the start of 2006 to close the year at 49.32 to the US dollar, its highest finish in nearly six years.

On the other hand, the stock market ended 2006 with a hefty 42.3 percent gain. The Philippine Stock Exchange index soared to 2,902.249 at the last trading day. That was the index's highest close since April 2997.

Gil C. Cabunoc

# No Cha-cha talk for Joe de V, allies during holidays

By Michael Lim Ubac

SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA JR (LEDEPYM, 1st) sends cheer in his chest but it's obvious that he's now about to relaunch Charter change (Cha-cha) anytime soon even after President Macapagal-Arroyo had announced that her administration would still vigorously pursue constitutional reforms.

In a telephone interview from New York City, De Venecia told the Inquirer he had advised the majority coalition in the House of Representatives to desist from talking about Cha-cha during the holidays.

"We cannot afford to divide the country during the Christmas season," the Speaker said, stressing that the ban on talking about Cha-cha would last until the third week of January, when Congress resumes sessions.

Instead of holding up-to-the-minute the Cha-cha ban was issued down by the Supreme Court recently, De Venecia advised the administration's allies to combat national remembrance instead.

### Grassroots

"We need to hear the sentiments of the people from the grassroots because they will be the ones who will benefit from the shift [to a parliamentary system]," De Venecia said.

He, however, said the House majority should still decide whether or not to pursue the constitutional convention (Con-con) mode of amending the Constitution before the end of January.

"We would have assured a constituent assembly [Con-con] to amend the Constitution, but the Senate wouldn't budge," he said.

In order to convene Congress into a constituent assembly, both the House and the Senate must agree on it.

The House's resolution two weeks ago to convene a Con-con without the participation of the Senate failed miserably after several sectors led by the Catholic Church called for a massive prayer rally at Luneta.

The Senate has limited constitutional fear to ease her, it asked the Senate to pass a resolution allowing for the holding of an election of Con-con delegates simultaneously with next year's May elections.

De Venecia said the House had agreed to introduce Charter amendments through a Con-con, the mode most favored by the Catholic Church, Protestant bishops, Ing Santiago and the Senate, "as the nation considers changes to modernize its political system and economic policies and bring the Philippines [up] to the status of Southeast Asia's economic tigers."

But GMA said a constitutional convention could also lift on dead men after the senators said they wanted to talk about Con-con only after next year's polls.

Following President Arroyo's renewed push for Charter reform, the administration-friendly Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (Ulap) is reportedly poised to file a mass petition with the Commission on Elections to amend the Constitution through a people's initiative.

Although previously unable to obtain support for Cha-cha domestically at this time, De Venecia found favor with the Centrist Democrat International (CDI), which represents 118 ruling and opposition political parties worldwide.

In a resolution, the CDI declared full backing for constitutional reforms in the Philippines and its proposed shift from a presidential to a parliamentary form of government to a major resolution adopted by the CDI Executive Committee.

### Foreign support

The CDI Executive Committee, which convened recently in Spain, unanimously adopted the resolution "supporting the government of the Republic of the Philippines in its efforts to achieve constitutional reforms."

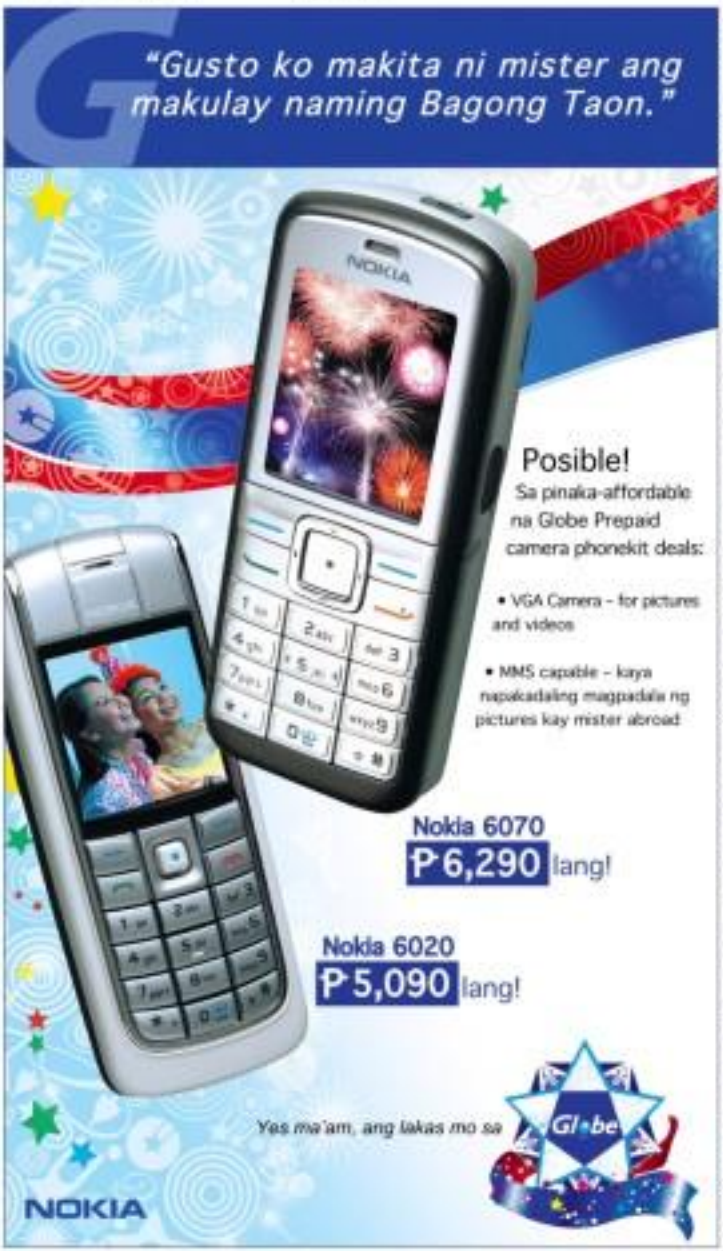
Dr. Wenceslao, president of CDI Asia-Pacific, which was launched in Manila last January, received a copy of the resolution.

The CDI leaders cited the Philippine government's efforts to "bring about greater political stability and hasten economic development by shifting its system of government from the decades-old, frustrated presidential to the successful parliamentary system."

The resolution hails one of the "world's most respected and influential political coalitions," which has ruling parties and coalitions in Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia, some amid continuing public debates on proposed Charter amendments, De Venecia said.

"It represents a significant movement and moral support for Charter reform in the Philippines from one of the most influential political coalitions that has time and again dominated European politics with Christian ideals and thinking."

He said the CDI takes dead to the belief that the parliamentary system was responsible for the economic success and political stability of the rich nations of Europe and most of Asia.

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# SLEX toll increase takes effect today

## But higher rates only apply to ground level section, operator clarifies

By Jean V. Sarmiento Jr.

STARTING TODAY, THE OPERator of the South Luzon Expressway will be charging motorists higher toll rates for the ground level section of the Skyway System from Alabang, Susut and Bicutan to Magallanes on C-5.

The increases of 10 percent to 20 percent in the Alabang-Magallanes C-5 sections of SLEX are being implemented even as the toll rates for the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) are being reduced by 10 percent.

The Skyway System is operated by Citra Metro Manila Tollways Corp., a joint venture between Citra Group of Indonesia and Philippine National Construction Corp.

The SLEX is operated by Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC), a unit of the Ayala Group of Companies. MNTC cited the strengthening peso against the dollar for the 10-percent reduction in toll rates in SLEX which also takes effect today.

While the toll for the ground level has increased, the rate (PHU) remains unchanged for the elevated Skyway section from Buendia in Taguig to Buendia in Makati.

"We hope this will encourage even more motorists to use the elevated section," Atilio Corpuz, spokesperson of the Toll Regulatory Board, said in a statement.

"This would result to faster travel time for those using the at-grade or ground level section."

Corpuz's statement is an acknowledgement that few motorists are using the elevated section because of its prohibitive price.

"Because of the higher rates, motorists using the ground level are in effect subsidizing those using the elevated section," Sonny Mallet, the spokesman, said regular users of SLEX, said yesterday.

More than 200,000 vehicles use the SLEX daily.

For cars, the toll rose from P20 to P90 for the distance to Magallanes or C-5 section; from P40 to P48 for the fares to Magallanes or C-5 section; and from P55 to P66 for Alabang to Filinvest to Magallanes or C-5.

From Alabang to Buendia, using the ground and elevated sections will cost a car owner a hefty P120.

For buses and light trucks or vans, the toll rose from P50 to P60 for Buendia to Magallanes or C-5; from P80 to P96 for fares to Magallanes or C-5; and from P130 to P120 for Alabang to Filinvest to Magallanes or C-5.

For heavy and multi-axle (truck and trailer), the toll rose from P75 to P90 for Buendia to Magallanes or C-5; from P120 to P144 for fares to Magallanes or C-5; and from P165 to P150 for Alabang to Filinvest to Magallanes or C-5.

CLOGGED ESTERO

A text message sent to Citizen's Call by Inquirer reader Joel, 40, a resident of Barangay Pharma, Quezon City, complained about an estero so full of garbage, it was impossible to see the water underneath. His text message read: "Yesterday, as I was on my way to Bintaro, I passed by the Estero de Magdalena near the corner of C.M. Recto and Jose Abad Santos. The estero was clogged with garbage and the stench unbearable. I hope something can be done about it before the rains come in order to avoid flooding in the area."

# Robbers break into bank, steal guns

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THEY WERE NICE BUT FOR THE GUNS.

Instead, the group of unidentified men who broke into a bank in Makati City before dawn yesterday were just after a shotgun and a pistol kept in the guard house, police said.

"It's not a bank heist because they were already inside and they did not even open the drawers and the vault. And we were told there wasn't any money inside," said Makati police chief, Supt. Gilbert Cruz.

Security guards of the Rural Bank of Makati on the corner of Dian Street and Gil Puyat Avenue discovered the break-in at around 6 a.m. yesterday, Cruz said. No guard was on duty on the evening, he added.

Initial investigation showed that some of the suspects used the fire exit to break into the bank while others removed through a broken window. All they took, however, were the guards' service firearms—a shotgun and a .38-caliber pistol—in a guardhouse outside the bank.

"It wasn't an armed robbery it was just a case of theft, because their only intention was to take the firearms of the guard on post. They were not professionals," Cruz said.

"We are also investigating the guards because it seemed security was lax as there was no one on duty at night," the police chief added.

The Makati Police Station has been closely watching the city's banks, particularly those inside the financial center. It was not clear, however, whether the rural bank, located outside the Central Business District, was among the banks in the list of tightly monitored establishments.

## DID YOU KNOW

SOFÍ Santiago in Manila was Spain's major defense position in the Philippines. Construction started in 1571 and was completed about 100 years later by Filipino forced labor. It is also called the "Shrine of Freedom" in memory of heroic Filipinos who were killed here by the Spaniards and Japanese. Perhaps the most famous prisoner of Fort Santiago was Dr. José P. Rizal who was led from the fort to Bagumbayan (now Rizal Park) on Dec. 30, 1896 to be executed by firing squad.

Gail I. Abadeer
Inquirer Research

# Fake software, computers seized

By Margaux C. Ortiz

AGENTS OF THE NATIONAL BUreau of Investigation seized P6.3 million worth of computers and unauthorized software during simultaneous raids held recently in Makati and Pasig.

NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division chief Jose Jesus Yap said that on Dec. 22, agents raided the CMS Technology Philippines office on Rufino St., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

Also raided were Kiche Engineering Pacific Rims International, at 2007 One San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center in Pasig City.

Yap said Autodesk Inc., through company counsel Sangson Negre Untalan Intellectual Property Attorneys, had filed a complaint against the owners of the two establishments at the NBI.

By virtue of search warrants issued by Judge Wilfredo Gaba Jr. of Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 8, agents raided the offices and confiscated 24 desktop computers and unlicensed copies of Autodesk Inc. software.

The approximate worth of the seized items was placed at P6.3 million, Yap said.

Charges of violation of Republic Act 8293 or the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines are being readied against the owners of the companies.

## METROBRIEFS

### 8 hurt in pillbox explosion

A SUSPECTED pillbox exploded in Makati Sharia the other night, injuring eight people. The victims were Omer Estrada, 41, and his siblings Jocnar Jocnar, Jaber Hanny and Cyrus, all residents of Kasalagan St., Makati; their neighbors Lalaine Dandoco, Nasrinjan Ali and Augusto Sagbal; and cafeteria driver Jaime Ramos. POO1 Ignacio Tabaldo of the Manila Police District (MPD) Station said the incident took place at around 8:45 p.m. Saturday at the corner of Arabkapan and San Andres Streets. Ignacio was fighting some firecrackers when someone threw a pillbox on the street.

Margaux C. Ortiz

### Illegal firecrackers, 'boga' destroyed

POLICE yesterday set fire to thousands of pieces worth of confiscated firecrackers and destroyed hundreds of "boga"—improvised rocket-propelled of PVC pipes. The items were confiscated by Philippine National Police's crackdown on illegal firecrackers to ensure the safety of the public during the New Year's Eve celebration.

Nancy C. Carvajal

# NBI to boost forensic skills with new equipment

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF Investigation (NBI) will be purchasing a new DNA machine this year to improve the agency's forensic capabilities.

NBI Director Nestor Mantaring said that they are still processing the papers for the acquisition of the machine which would be placed in the bureau's forensic and chemistry division.

"Our old DNA machine has no capability of performing some important tests," Mantaring told the Inquirer in an interview, adding that the old equipment could no longer analyze badly burned bones.

The old DNA machine was purchased in 1995 for P3.8 million.

Mantaring claimed that the new machine would be a big help to the bureau's elite Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) team.

The team—composed of highly technical people such as medico-legal officers, expert technicians or mechanics, fingerprint experts, DNA technicians, dentists and photographers—has been described as "one of the best in Asia and in the world."

"Our DVI team is very experienced," the NBI director said.


LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 2006-756

# NOTICE TO THE MOTORING PUBLIC

Pursuant to DOTC Department Orders 2005-34 and 2005-37, the DOTC/LTO is mandated to efficiently and effectively implement the emission standards for motor vehicles as provided by the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 through the implementation of the ***PETC-ITF Interconnectivity Project***.

The PETC-ITF Interconnectivity Project allows the interconnection between the PETC's and the existing DOTC/LTO Information Technology System (DOTC/LTO IT System). With a three-way matching capability, the PETC-ITF Interconnectivity Project permits online authentication with the LTO-IT System which immediately locks the Certificate of Emission Compliance (CEC) number to the accredited testing centers and the motor vehicle record, which would subsequently prevent the re-issuance of the CEC to another motor vehicle.

Effective **JANUARY 2, 2007**, the public is strongly advised to have their motor vehicle emission test processed by DTI Accredited and DOTC/LTO Authorized PETCs that are connected online and real time to the LTO-IT system and bearing this seal .

REYNALDO P. BERROYA
Assistant Secretary
LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE

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# The WORLD

Elinor Lenarne B. Gacoo

NEW YEAR WELCOME
PUPILS line up to form the numbers "2007" to celebrate the upcoming New Year at a school in Hefei, in east China's Anhui province Dec. 31. AFP

## Australia's PM warns of Pacific instability

SYDNEY—PRIME MINISTER John Howard has warned that Australia needs to work hard to prevent South Pacific island nations falling into the hands of hostile groups causing instability.

Howard said in a media report that Australia would need to play a major role in the region for the next 10 to 20 years to prevent instability in countries such as Papua New Guinea, Fiji, East Timor and the Solomon Islands.

"The South Pacific has the ongoing problems of poverty, bad governance and corruption, and what we're trying to do is do something about both. It's in our interests strategically historically and international reality," he said in the Sunday Telegraph.

"I can understand Australians saying, 'Well, look, let's forget about it. Leave them to their own devices, don't waste any money,' but that's the wrong approach to take, because they will fall into the hands of the evil terrorist enemies."

Howard, who has recently sent forces to East Timor and the Solomon Islands to help restore law and order, said Australia was in a difficult position because of allegations of interference.

The conservative prime minister has repeatedly rejected attempts to paint Australia as the "sheriff of the Pacific."

The description has harked over since former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and Australia would never be accepted in the Asia-Pacific region because it acted as a "US deputy sheriff."

"It's very hard, because you get some early gains, then, as the shots start to pinch, they start saying, 'This is going too far, you're bullying us, you're interfering,'" Howard said. AFP

# Bombs rock Iraq after hanging; 77 dead

## For Arabs, Saddam's death is 'eye-for-an-eye'

BAGHDAD—CARNAGE GRIPPED IRAQ AFTER Saddam Hussein was executed on Saturday when 77 people died in bomb attacks and December became the deadliest month for American forces in more than two years.

In the hours after Saddam swung from the scaffold in the capital, a car bomb exploded in a Shiite market in the town of Kufa, a triple bombing ripped through a Baghdad neighborhood and another blew up outside a children's hospital.

Although it was not clear whether the attacks were orchestrated by Saddam supporters to avenge his death, the abyss of civil strife into which Iraq has sunk since the US-led invasion has cast a shadow over Shiite celebrations.

Doctor Mowfeq al-Obari, the health director in the Shiite province Najaf, said 31 people were killed and another 38 people wounded by the car bombing in Kufa, most of them women and children shopping ahead of the Eid al-Adha feast.

Police Col. Ali Jasari said that the vehicle, a dozen-made fits, had been packed in cucumber for months when it exploded, ripping through the weekend crowd preparing for the three-day Muslim feast.

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- Bulls spoil LeBron's 22nd birthday /A25



SPORTS

Editor Teddyrick D. Melendrez

# Pacquiao-Barrera rematch off

By Solvert L. Loguinlay, Contributor

THE MUCH-AWAITED REMATCH BETWEEN MANNY Pacquiao–Marco Antonio Barrera is off—for now.

A top official of the World Boxing Organization, who has been in constant touch with Golden Boy Promotions, revealed yesterday that Barrera has already been scheduled to defend his World Boxing Council super feather weight title against fellow Mexican Juan Manuel Marquez on March 17 in Las Vegas.

"I have just been informed that it's (the Barrera-Marquez bout) already made," said WBO vice president for Asia Pacific Fernando Ba, who is coordinating with GBP and Cebu's AGC Promotions to hold the second edition of the World Cup next year in the Philippines.

"I think Pacquiao will have to fight another opponent."

Fernandez is coordinating with Cebu boxing officials to re-issue such for the staging of the World Cup, which will be a duel between top Filipino fighters against their Mexican counterparts.

Barrera is being promoted by Golden Boy Promotions, which is vying to get the promotional rights of Pacquiao from Bob Arum's Top Rank.

GBP chief executive officer Richard Schaefer had earlier proposed a 50-50 deal for a possible Barrera-Pacquiao rematch on March 17 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Schaefer dismissed an earlier announcement by Pacquiao that he had closed deals to remain in his promotion.

He also gave Pacquiao until Monday (December 4 in Manila) to make up his mind, even as he urged the Filipino fighter to be his own boss, instead of listening to people around him who "have been giving him wrong information."

Arum, who attended the Manila Bowl press conference where Pacquiao announced his choice of Top Rank, said Schaefer's 50-50 proposal was a good sign that GBP was opening up the negotiation process for a Pacquiao-Barrera rematch.

However, Schaefer refused to negotiate with Arum who, according to the GBP official, did not have the promotional rights over Pacquiao.

Arum had announced that should a Pacquiao-Barrera rematch fails through, he would give Pacquiao an exposition of his choice for an April 28 bout in Macao, China, for a purse of not less than $3 million.

The fight dates, however, is in relation to the Mary J. Cruz De La Hoya Floyd Mayweather Jr. showdown, which is considered by experts as the biggest boxing event in recent memory and expected to become the highest-grossing pay-per-view attraction.

After scoring a second straight knockout victory over Mexican great Erik Morales last November, Pacquiao said his next goal is to fight Barrera, whom he stopped in their second encounter in 2003.

The promotional row was a result of Pacquiao's signing up with GBP last September only to report to have in favor of Top Rank following his second conquest of Morales in Las Vegas.

PRO LEAGUE IN 2006

## PBA on track to recapturing its old magic

THE PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL Association ushered new heights as it eyes to celebrate its milestone month with a colorful and rough season for the first play the 30th league.

Significant improvements in gate receipts, live attendance and television ratings were achieved by the league as it embarked on the best sports marketing tools in the country.

A phenomenal increase of more than 74 percent in live attendance marked the league's appearance and forever than 15 6,000 starting up for the games is averaged fifteen Manila venues compared with 425,000 last year.

That increase gave the league an average of 6,645 fans per game, an increase of almost 10,175 percent compared with the 2006-05 season. Thought it was not the league's all-time high, the figure was easily the biggest since 1997.

### Free-to-fans

It took an increase of more than P57 million doubled last season's P57 million take, this despite the fact that the league had opened several sections of its venues to spectators at no fee.

Total revenues also increased by P26-million, from P135 million to P160-million.

"The game we built the past year are just part of the PBA's resurrection," said last season's league's that the expected has tripled their release goal of bringing the overall back at season's start is starting to bear fruits.

"The fundamentals are laid down by my predecessors and my job, will the help of my fellow governors, was merely to follow up on them and back them up by putting certain policies and procedures," said the still-mannered former player turned corporate executive.

"Remember, I was just a product of the same board. With the cooperation of the entire board of governors, we were able to see the light."

### More season format

Updates was where the PBA was headed.

League commissioner Noli Eala initiated several season format of two conferences, three-month duration, marked different tournament means, made a clear stance on when the PBA stands to be the nationalism is concerned, and forged an eye out for expansion activities and exploring the playing field.

Among the way it unfolded that with MIC-3 was locked into phase

PBA, 1/28

NEW star's Ike Gabby Espinas of San Miguel Beer (center) add to the PBA's pulling power at the box office and on TV

## No holidays, just gym work, for Giants, Realtors

GAME WITHOUT END

1 p.m. — Practice at Ateneo

BATE CAMPS ADMIT THEY only have only themselves to blame for their disappointing finishes in the classification round of the Talk 'N Text PBA Philippine Cup.

At a form of self-punishment, they agree to be holidays in the gym.

Cancelled were the short trips to the United States for the All-Star and run of team vacations for the homegrown players.

The Realtors Chamber Giants and the Ateneo Eagles are telling to the gym this Yuletide season as the two teams prepare for a game that will decide the last remaining quarterfinalist in the PBA's centennial conference. The losers will join the Alaska team. At 23 Espinas and the Coca-Cola Tigers in the solid-seed phase.

The 7 p.m. playoff, set in the Ateneo Auditorium, is something that Purefoods and the Giants could have avoided by just winning one of their last two games.

The Giants and the Realtors, however, have they've put their fullest behind them, and both look forward to redemption in the series scheduled on Jan. 3.

"It's more a reality that we have to face," said Jun Garcia coach Manolo Chua. "We've been working hard in practice and well give it our best shot."

And Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio: "We don't talk about the past, we just look forward to one thing and that's to win. It's a must."

Chua and Gregorio urged a rough battle, just like their first two games that were decided by no more than four points.

Last year, victories were by form of a buzzer-beater, and Gregorio acknowledged the fact that his Giants were through the proverbial eye of the needle to win both games. "Both battled down to midgame-crunchtimes. We could be in for another tough game."

But a healthier Mon Fingoy could give the Giants tremendous boom. Fingoy, still recuperating from a knee work arthroplasty, completes their last game against Alaska Milk.

"My doctor didn't want me to play, but I wanted to help the team," said Fingoy.

The reigning Most Improved Player has a job cut out for him versus the 6-foot-8 twosome Kelly Williams, who's been averaging 16.7 points and 10.5 rebounds per game.

Other key match-ups in this contest are Dennis Espino versus Ronjay Enrico Villanueva, Marlou Aquino against Jun Limpot, Rudolph Hernandez versus James Yap, and Paolo Hubalde is against Roger Yap.

TOKYO DOUBLES

## Gabica, De Luna 3rd; Taiwanese rule

DE LUNA (left) and Gabica ponder their next shot against the Koreans.

ASIAN GAMES STANDOUTS ARNOLD Gabica and Jeffrey De Luna teamed Korean Jeong Young-Soo and Kim Woong-Gu, 9-5, to secure third place in the 2006 Mazz Crossel Nine-Cup billiards tournament late Saturday in Tokyo.

The Filipino duo, who pulled off a gold medal-worthy singles finish in the recent 15th Asiad in Doha, Qatar, won 400,000 yen (about P160,000).

Taiwan's Yang Ching-shun and Wu Chia-ching topped the former world champion Kazuhiko Takahashi and the prodigious Haruna Hijikata of Japan, 10-7, to win the Seoul double crown. The Taiwanese pocketed the top purse of 1 million yen.

Pio, the 2005 World Red winner, and Bang, the two-time Asian Games 8-ball gold medal winner, moved into the title duel with a 9-7 decision of Gabica and De Luna earlier.

Gabica and De Luna could have contended for the title as they opened up strongly against the Taiwanese. They led, 5-1 and 8-3, before Gabica had a run-in that allowed the Pin-Bang pair to grab 9-7 lead.

The Filipino tandem had a chance to send the match into a fifth ball reading, but Gabica's break to the 10th rack resulted in a difficult layout, and De Luna went on to make it look all easy for the Taiwanese duo pounced on to finish the match.

"We did our best, but the breaks went against us, particularly in the latter part of the match," Gabica said.

"The draw also did not favor us because we saw the Taiwanese in the first rounds. It could have been a different story if we met them later," added Gabica, who also produced a silver in the 8-ball in Asiad.

Takahashi and 17-year-old Hijikata, the 2005 Asama World Junior runners-up, settled for the bronze after losing to Pio, 10-7.

Marlon Bonna-Abra, Correspondent

# Jinggoy caught in a win-win situation

CHEERS! WE'VE GOT A PRIME MIN-ister and hey, Jinggoy Estrada must be told he's in a position to have the game running scare that should want to root rooting for Philippine basketball.

All Jinggoy has to do is keep mouthing and refrain to be distracted by a factional group that still seemed to have a say in the game.

We must have the selfish sector from Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) which on Friday tried to reject Estrada's well-applauded appointment with business tycoon Ronnie E Tanglinan.

* * *

For the record, Estrada, reigning president of the BAP and Tanglinan have joined hands and sealed a pact which should effectively result in the lifting by the International Amateur Basketball Federation (FIBA) of its suspension of Philippine basketball.

No appeal. Tanglinan will be president and Estrada chair of the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP), a body composed of well-meaning and responsible sectors in Philippine basketball.

The discredited BAP section, however, tried to thumb down the Estrada-Tanglinan team-up.

The group, obviously goaded again by the dreaded BAP no-gen Graham Lim, claimed it has not been consulted and insulted on having a say in charting local basketball affairs.

* * *

You are reacting about this distastefully only today.

It's like this. The discredited BAP group again tried to use media to elevate its selfish intent.

The good news is that a solid and responsible sector in the national sportsmoving community readily spread the ill-designs of Graham Lim & Co. and thereby throw their press release into the nearest garbage can.

Your reporter here received the leakproto sports desk on Friday and had the chance to go over the each-eyed claims by Lim's group.

It's with joy and gratitude that we applaud the timely move by reform reformers of the country's leading cliches, namely Ted Melendrez of the Inquirer, Ding Mendoza of the Bulletin and Lito Tacujan of the Star.

"We all know it's again Graham Lim who's behind this move to disturb down the Tanglinan-Estrada working agreement," said Ding Mendoza, who spearheaded the ban on the disruptive press release.

* * *

Yes, Jinggoy Estrada must've also read about that inside move by Lim's group-mole now.

The message here for Jinggoy from chance talks: sincerity cures for ISP basketball is: there's no turning back.

The ball is in your hands, senator.

You're also in the perfect spot to create a winning basket for Philippine basketball.

For once, Lim's group, while insisting on rightful representation in the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas, has no business claiming it has worked for the betterment of ISP basketball.

For the record, Lim & Co. had repeatedly succeeded in making the Philippines a laughing stock in international basketball tournaments.

Those ignominious results were specifically the reason the BAP was banned by the Philippine Olympic Committee.

Now, it goes without saying that the POC, headed by president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, will come up with the vital move to make what Estrada and Tanglinan have started a complete success.

Just like with Estrada, the POC chief is in a position to start the New Year with one heroic act—the removal of Philippine basketball.

A Happy New Year to all!

BIG numbers for big men (R Quinahan, right) of Mail and More.

# Quiñahan paces PBL player race

By Jaeniber M. Paye

WITH THE PBL SILVER CUP EXPLORER ON SATURDAY, FIVE BIG MEN WILL find themselves on top of the Group.

Mail and More's JR Quiñahan led in the offensive rating halfway through the eliminations round with 18.71 points.

The Jumbo stood to defend his crown averaged 14.71 points, 9.86 rebounds and a league-best 2.14 blocks per game.

A current hunt for defending Country Cream Quiñahan struggled in his early outings before regaining his explosive inside game.

"Ito'y a tampuan pinoy and Mail and More coach Lawrence Chongson. "Isa'y growing sa'kin ang isa'y mas, Mike, veteran."

Nigerian rookie Ime Ekwe came in second at 17.71 even as he took the breach as a multiplayers treasurer in Magnolia's last outing.

Intimidating at 6-foot-8, Ekwe led the league in rebounds at 11.86 on top of 9.86 rebounds and a second best 2.43 blocks.

But while Quiñahan crowned the Centers in 6 starting 5 of Mail and the Nigerian-based new rule with a 2-1 slate.

"We still left some play," said Ekwe, the reigning NCAA Most Valuable Player and Rookie of the Year.

Denver Armored Jayson Oat got a huge lift from his double-figure scoring in the last four games with the Tanduay Rhum.

The rookie-mid stood to third at 10.86 with averages of 13.14 points and 8.43 boards.

Cebuanas Lhuillier Miss Diabla star Ken Bono occupied the fourth spot with a 10.71 rating.

More than just personal big-boy stats Quiñahan, Ekwe, the Cheap! SM29 dispatch's good shooting touch to emerge as the scoring leader with 17 points per game, apart from scoring 4.14 rebounds and 1.14 assists.

Magnolia's Ronell Ellamal rounded out the top five at 13.63 after posting a fourth best 13.62 points and 6.4 boards per outing.

Point guard Rocky Escalona of Cebuana Lhuillier Pero Pedrals also came to the fort by ending fourth in assists at 6.07 apg and in steals at 1.57 spg.

Aside from Ekwe, other top rookie performers were Sentral Siena's Rabelo Gregorio with 11.75 points and 7.71 rebounds and Super-PCU Black Bedouins with 10.14 markers and eight boards.

The league will resume on Saturday at the Ultimate College Sports Center in Dasmiñas.

Mail and More will battle the winless Manila Bank LHP at 2 p.m., followed by the 4 p.m. tussle between Super-PCU and Harbour Centre.

Ginebra Sans claimed the sole lead before the two-week holiday break with a 6-2 record.

Mail and More and Super-PCU shared the second spot with 5-2 slates.

# Pro league on track to recapturing old magic

From page A13

and official games were held anyway.

The draft, pre-season exhibition games and All-Star Weekend have also turned into highly visible and marketable events.

On cue, Fleetfoods and Red Bull provided the thrill, rising beyond the once established and into locks itself's title to become the face of the PBA season.

## Clutch Game 7 win

The Rainbow Jaws first blood by beating the Giants in six games of the league-based Fiesta Conference finals, thanks to Jeff Chan's huge penalty in five years. The title was included a clutch Game 7 win over favorite Barangay Ginebra in the semifinals.

A conference later, Fleetfoods reversed things, bagging the Philippine Cup at the expense of Red Bull as it clinched the title in the opener of the series. Making the victory more for the Giants was their amazing comeback from a 3-3 deficit against the Alaska Aces in the semifinals.

From team success came individual feats.

Jayson Castro was the league winner, bagging Most Valuable Player honors over teammate Mike Cortez. Rookie sensation Jimmy Alapag and Red Bull's Enrico Villanueva, both of whom figured in a tightly fought race for the first Player of the Conference award, Fiesta Cup).

## 19 straight games

Dennis Scott also had his share, scoring 20-plus points in 19 straight games to win Best Player honors in the Philippine Cup. Larry Fonacier became the lowest-drafted player to 15 years to win Rookie of the Year, Beau Campos was also named Coach of the Year by the PBA Press Corps and Jun Limpot finally won a league title after 13 seasons.

It was not all roses for the league, however.

Long-time PBA member Fernando Hwell bowed out of the league. Fernando's retirement came before the game. Fonacier's tragic fall on Bobby Ong's chest left him paralyzed for some time before he showed signs of recovering. He's now in the 10 undergoing rigorous rehabilitation program) and Red Bull was fined a record P500,000 for shoving Ryan Gregorio during a Philippine Cup game, the friendly wrestling-out in Game 5 of the semifinal-to-encounter Sen. Miguel Zubiri in the Philippine Cup.

In all, the year was a rewarding one for the PBA, making fans and current stars Rudy Verjan of "Talk 'N Text upbeat over the league's Quiñahan-versus-Ekwe business in contract number times.

## Breaking records

Under his chairmanship, Vargas laid out the plans for the league to build its own millennium and of the new age, which, in terms of the opening of the league PBA record 17,000 (behind the so-called "the fit season" or increasing by 20 percent. On-line gate attendance is down but income, hopefully, by 20 percent.

So far, the league appears on track to achieving both.

Notable signs for the PBA's future have been identified in Quezon City and Taguig while early returns in gate receipts and attendance—both of which increased by 15 and 20 percent, respectively during the semi-period of the last Philippine Cup—had the league exploring new ways to boost money in years. — With Manny B. Castillo

## Submission of weights today for Filipon 5-rock derby

OFFICIAL ENTRIES IN THE MEDIA BIG BIG 5-CLOCK Derby, the main event of Philippine Dodge Festival, will be accepted today from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The Big 5 starts at 9 p.m. participants eligible tomorrow while the race here per the battles on Thursday. Gearbox will compete for the title on Saturday. Participants with 2.5 tonnes in the attendance will share in the 7 million pesos. Those will also get a total extra entry will receive extra entry for contest, said Lawyer Hans Rosales Carolina and Dr Jay Tagore, who will be in charge of the race. The Big 5 will be engaged in extra fee at P1,200 and contract fee at P5,200. The derby's sponsors are Liquor Dogfare and Standardized Emulsion. For reservation of clubhouses, call 861-2345, 823-1626 or 890-8888 ext.

# Wesley: So young, so good in 2006

**The 10 Filipinos as ranked by FIVB (January 2007)**

1. Ulli Mark Franjo (2576) 2. Ulli Angelo Arriola Jr. (2515) 3. Ulli Eugene Torre (2487) 4. Ulli Virgilio Hernandez Jr. (2469) 5. Int. master Garcia (2462) 6. Int. Master Hernandez (2387) 7. Ulli Darwin Lee (2455) 8. Ulli Jayson Gonzales (2442) 9. Ulli Mikhail Ilde (2367) 10. Int. Ulli Jose Mari Abrera (2358). 11. Ulli Oliver Dimakiling (2442) 12. Ulli Jayson Gonzales (2442) 13. Ulli Mikhail Ilde (2367) 14. Ulli Jose Mari Abrera (2358). 15. Ulli Oliver Dimakiling (2442)

A CHILD PRODIGY WENT ON a romp in 2006, surpassing many accomplishments in the process.

It was a stunning result for 15-year-old Wesley So, more if GM Rudy Vergara remained to the Filipino ranked highest by the world chess federation (FIDE).

WESLEY SO: Ahead of 3 GMs

PARANDA: Declining form

MYTONG: Still No. 1

Paraguay's Elo dropped in 2575 from 2606, however, after a series of poor performances in the Olympiad and several international events.

GM Rogelio Antonio Jr. stood second here with 2532, followed by GM Eugene Torre (2547).

He, meanwhile, impressively strung up records to quickly solve the global rankings.

The wonder kid from Baguio City, became the youngest IM Olympian at 12. By the time he turned 13, he became the youngest ever national champion. He posted International Master and the youngest player to obtain a GM result.

With such conquests, he climbed to No. 12 in the January 2007 Feb list with an Elo of 2451, finishing ahead of GMs Buenaventure Villamayor (2502) and Nelson Mariano (2432).

So will kick off his campaign at the 2007 Asian Zonals in Vietnam on Jan. 24-29 together with Mongolia's Bayasgal Dulmaa, Oliver Dimakiling and Darwin Laylo.

The Bedanian high school student recently raised his record 100 mark in the 2006 Singapore Masters and in the 1st PGMA Invitational Open back-to-back wins.

The National Chess Federation of the Philippines president and Batajan Ali Taz Rep. Rompaes "Bambi" Pelaez is eyeing more Filipinos to achieve GM results in 2007.

"We're aiming for four to six GM results," said Pelaez. Marlon Bernardino, Cristi Bodon

# World Cup of boxing in Cebu set March 4

By Sabrel L. Lagumbay, Contributor

THE SECOND EDITION OF THE Mission na Philippines World Cup of boxing will take place on March 4 in Cebu City.

"This World Cup Series, the Philippines and Mexico is on," said promoter Sammy Gello-nito of the 5000 Sports Promotions' SEA Boxing Gym, who is coordinating the event with Golden Boy Promotions of boxing great Oscar De La Hoya, also big in promotion interest promoter.

Gello-nito said the date has been approved by the GBP to give way to the mammoth March 17 Manny Pacquiao-Jermain Taylor WBC welterweight showdown.

He said that GBP president De la Hoya and his partners Bernard Hopkins and Shane Mosley are expected to fly to Cebu for the event. Also expected to grace the event are GBP CEO Richard Schaefer and international matchmaker Enrique "Pancasan" Encarnacion.

The event, backed by Jollibee Meals, will feature WBC super bantamweight king Daniel Ponce De Leon defense of his title against the undefeated Jose "Boom Boom" Bandrau, while WBC super-fly king Fernando Montiel will also defend his title against J. "The Desert" Cuero.

A planned WBC bantam showdown between reigning champ Jhonny Gonzalez and Gerry Peñalosa is still being awaited out, although organizers said that should the Gonzalez camp insist on not fighting, they might replace that with the WBO junior flyweight defense of Hugo Cazares possibly against Rodel Mayol or Joel Salavarria.

There will be seven bouts in the card made up of three world title matches, one non-championship bout, and three semi-elite events that would sell pit Filipino versus Mexican fighters.

LOOKING AHEAD

# Another great year for Woods

LOS ANGELES—AMID all the changes in store for the US PGA Tour in 2007, expect one thing to stay the same: Tiger Woods will again reign supreme.

The season starting with the Mercedes-Benz Championship in Kapalua, Hawaii, on Thursday is being touted by US tour officials as a "new era" in golf.

The revamped schedule includes the 33-week FedEx Cup season, in which players earn points to make it into the US$35 million playoffs for the FedEx Cup.

There last tournamento, ending with the Tour Championship in September, are designed to set a streamlined season in dramatic style.

WOODS: Dominant

MICKELSON: Mundane

SCOTT: Unnerving

Whatever form it whipped up by the big money finale, Woods himself promises to remain golf's most compelling story.

The game's undisputed heavyweight champion closed 2006 with eight victories and three runners-up finishes in his final 11 stroke-play events, all in the wake of his father's death in May.

When he launches his 2007 campaign at the Buick Invitational at Torrey Pines, California, on January 25, Woods will be going for a unbeatable 13 tour victory in as many starts.

In April, he will arrive at Augusta National seeking the third leg of the "Tiger Slam" at the Masters, having won the last two major championships of 2006, the British Open and US PGA Championship.

While Woods rides the crest of a wave into the new season, many of those who would seek to challenge him will be hoping for a fresh start in 2007.

Phil Mickelson, who won his third straight major title at the 2006 Masters, suffered one of the worst meltdowns in major championship history at the US Open, where he had the tournament in hand before a double-bogey at the final hole that handed the victory to Australian Geoff Ogilvy.

Mickelson was clearly a lot-to-do golf's radar the rest of the year, while Ogilvy, despite his increased confidence, was unable to threaten as to suit how hard it is to challenge Woods.

Australian Adam Scott, ranked fourth in the world, made it clear that Woods remains the yardstick by which all golfers are measured.

"It might take awhile, but if I was to be No. 1 in the world at some point in my career, then I think that would be the best achievement I could ever do in golf, to get past Tiger Woods," Scott said. AFP

WOODS with Elin

## Tiger, wife expecting first child

LOS ANGELES—TIGER WOODS had double reason to celebrate on Saturday when he announced on his 31st birthday that his wife Elin will give birth to their first child next year.

"We are expecting our first child this summer," the American golf superstar said on his official Web site.

"Obviously, we couldn't be happier and our families are thrilled. I have always wanted to be a dad. I just wish my father could be around to share the news."

Woods's father Earl died in May this year after a long battle with cancer. He now took a somewhat break from golf to deal with his father's illness and subsequent death before returning after the 2006 PGA Tour with eight victories, including two majors.

Woods and Elin Nordegren of Sweden married in October 2004, and Woods has said that he wants a family before he retires.

Woods's children's money instead of his. He did not say when in the summer the baby is due, although it likely would be between the U.S. Open and British Open.

The world's No. 1 player is skipping the season-opening Mercedes-Benz Championship next week in Maui.

"I'm going to stick close to home for the next few weeks," he said.

Woods will start his '07 season in the Buick Invitational at the end of January. Reuters

## Top trainer, Delp; 74

LAUREL, MARYLAND—HALL OF Fame trainer Grover C. "Bud" Delp, who saddled Kentucky Derby and Preakness champion Spectacular Bid among his more 3,700 winners, has died, officials said on Saturday.

Laurel Park officials said Delp died of complications from cancer late on Friday at his Gilmore City home. He was 74.

Inducted into racing's Hall of Fame in 2002, Delp saddled 3,619 winners, ninth on the all-time list, and his horses won purses totaling nearly $41 million.

Delp, a lifelong Maryland resident, is best known for training Spectacular Bid, who won the Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes in 1979. In 1980, Delp earned an Eclipse Award as the top trainer for guiding Spectacular Bid through an undefeated season. Reuters

# Bulls spoil LeBron's 22nd birthday

CHICAGO—GUILERME BODED A CAREER-high 32 points and nabbed six rebounds Saturday as the Chicago Bulls beat Cleveland, 100-92, to spoil LeBron James's 22nd birthday.

Ben Gordon scored 21 points and LeBron scored 19 but added 11 and 10 rebounds for the Bulls, who had 35 of their total points come from the bench.

The Bulls trailed, 67-60, when Larry Hughes made a 16-foot jumper until 7:16 left in the third quarter.

Soonest, Chicago went on a 24-8 run over the next 9:50 to take a commanding 86-67 lead with 5:23 remaining in the third period.

Deng shot 13 of 19 from the field and paced his second straight game after spending his right wrist at a August bed by Miami's James Posey on Wednesday.

He had surgery on the same wrist during the 2006-06 National Basketball Association season.

The third-year forward has scored 57 points in 36 of 35 shooting over the last two games for the Bulls, who improved to 12-8 at home against Eastern Conference opponents.

Cleveland star James scored 30 points and grabbed nine rebounds for the Cavaliers, who shot 45 percent and fell to 1-5 when allowing an opponent to reach the 100-point mark.

"They turned up the pressure and the jump shots and attacks we were making in the first half stopped going for us," said James, who wrestled his right ankle during the fourth quarter but didn't think it was serious. "Chicago is a great team at home. They went on that big run, and it killed us."

In Orlando, Florida, the Orlando Magic took advantage of an injury-depleted Miami Heat on Saturday to snap their National Basketball Association skid.

Dwight Howard scored 18 points and grabbed 13 rebounds and Trevor Ariza added 16 and 10 off the bench to lead the Magic to a 97-88 pounding of the defending champions Heat, who were without NBA Finals Most Valuable Player Dwyane Wade for the second straight night.

Leading 31-11 with 10:22 left in the second quarter, Orlando went on a 36-6 run to close out the half and take a 46-37 lead.

The Magic held the Heat scoreless for more than seven minutes during the second quarter before Miami broke the drought on two free throws by Earl Boykins with 2:40 to play.

Wade sat out with a sprained right wrist and Jason Williams was sidelined by tendinitis in his right knee.

Miami's All-Star center Shaquille O'Neal is still sidelined with torn knee cartilage.

Tony Battie scored 12 points for the Magic, who finished 9 but to their second fewest output of the season. Miami scored just 16 points against the Chicago Bulls on opening night. AFP

CAREER-HIGH: 32 points for the Bulls' Deng

HOWARD

## NBA LEADERS

SCORING

| PLAYER | TEAM | PTS | AVG |
|---|---|---|---|
| Anthony | Den | 638 | 32.8 |
| Iverson | Den | 602 | 30.7 |
| Arenas | Wash | 600 | 30.0 |
| Bryant | LA | 556 | 28.4 |
| Nowitzki | Dal | 555 | 27.8 |
| Wade | Mia | 534 | 27.6 |
| James | Cle | 530 | 27.1 |
| Pierce | Bos | 508 | 26.8 |
| Johnson | Atl | 500 | 26.3 |
| Yao | Hou | 499 | 26.0 |

REBOUNDS

| | | TOT | AVG |
|---|---|---|---|
| Howard | Orl | 380 | 19.0 |
| Garnett | Min | 359 | 18.2 |
| Brown | Utah | 360 | 17.7 |
| Chandler | Nlk | 306 | 17.3 |
| Okafor | Char | 339 | 17.2 |
| Lee | N.Y. | 330 | 16.6 |
| Dandrope | Port | 296 | 16.3 |
| Walters | Dal | 302 | 16.1 |
| Duncan | S.A. | 298 | 15.8 |
| Wentzell | Sac | 271 | 15.8 |

ANTHONY

ASSISTS

| | | AST | AVG |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nash | Pho | 284 | 11.3 |
| Kidd | N.J. | 257 | 9.5 |
| Billups | Det | 240 | 9.0 |
| Paul | N.O. | 242 | 9.0 |
| Davis | S.A. | 220 | 8.8 |
| Williams | Utah | 212 | 8.4 |
| Gilbert | Sac | 208 | 8.1 |
| Ford | Tor | 244 | 8.1 |
| Iverson | Den | 194 | 7.8 |
| Jackson | Den | 186 | 7.8 |

NASH

## Rockets' Wells sidelined, too

HOUSTON—THE HOUSTON ROCKets, already without injured star center Yao Ming, will be without swingman Bonzi Wells for a week with a sore lower back, the National Basketball Association team said Saturday.

It is the same injury that forced Wells to miss Friday's 91-88 victory over the Atlanta Hawks.

Wells signed a two-year, $5 million contract in the offseason. With that expected to injury-plagued campaign with the Rockets. The nine-year NBA veteran missed 17 games in Houston earlier because of a groin injury. Wells averaged 13.6 points with Sacramento last season, but scored 6.3 points and 4.2 rebounds in seven role. AFP

# Nadal, Nalbaldian head topnotch field

CHENNAI, INDIA—WORLD NUMBER two Rafael Nadal kickstarts his 2007 campaign at the ATP Chennai Open from Monday against the arrangers Serial over assembled for India's leading tennis event.

The Spaniard's main challenger at the $450,000 season opener will be ATP's 8 David Nalbaldian, who led Argentina into the Davis Cup final against eventual winner Russia earlier this month.

Veteran Carlos Moya, a two-time champion here, Australian Hawkeye Gilbert and Thailand and world No. 37 Xavier Malisse of Belgium will lead further player to a score that features 10 top 100 players.

Three Frenchmen—the 40th ranked Arbert Sarraceau, Arbert Santoro and Nicolas Mahut—are also in the mix along with newly crowned Asian Games champion Somdev Devvarman of India.

"This is going to be a tough week, a tough start to the season," said the 20-year-old Nadal, who beat former world number four Ramon Schaeffer of Germany in the first round.

Nadal, looking to challenge world champion Roger Federer for the number one spot in 2007, hopes for a better start to the year after a crippling foot injury kept him out of the first six months of the past season.

He missed the 2006 Australian Open before winning five of his first eight tournaments including a second successive Pennsylvania title on Roland Garros.

But the game left-hander failed to win another title in his last eight tournaments of the season.

Nalbaldian, who turns 25 on Monday, hopes to recapture the form that made him world No. 3 in March and ranked him the year-ending Masters title in 2005.

The Argentine, who is seeded to meet Nadal in the final, takes on Austrian Peter Luczak in the opening round and faces a possible semi-final clash against either Mirza Basdeda or Benjamin.

Pamdeas, who stunned the Chennai Open final for four consecutive years from 2002-2005 and won the title in 2003, is 0-8 again after a wrist injury forced him to withdraw from the Asian Games singles competition in Doha. Pamdeas faces a qualifier in the first round. AFP

NADAL: Top seed

# SPORTS

TRULY AN HVE! Jojo Duncil (center) donates school supplies to pupils of Segundo Esguerra elementary school in Pulilan, Bulacan.

## 'Pencil ni Duncil,' a thanksgiving

By Jasmine W. Paje

IT WAS A CHARITY SHOT HE DIDN'T MISS in mins.

University of Santo Tomas star Jojo Duncil got everything he wanted in his young basketball career—a UAAP championship crown and a Finals Most Valuable Player plum.

Showcasing his love in 2006, the 6-foot-3 swingman showered all the good fortune that came his way. But Duncil still felt the need to share his blessings.

"I wanted to help other people even in a little way," Duncil said in Filipino.

### Educational needs

After the season-ear pain season celebrations, Duncil found time to hold his personal Gankagiving. With the help of Teddy Peralta of sports management firm Team, Duncil decided to help public school students with their educational needs.

"It was my first charity work," said Duncil, last Dec. 19, Duncil donated pencils and calendars to about 1,000 pupils of Segundo Esguerra Memorial Elementary School in Dampol, Pulilan, Bulacan.

"Their principal Jose Talosod was very happy that his school became the first beneficiary," said Peralta, who dubbed the outreach project as "Pencil ni Duncil."

The students' warm welcome also reunited the 23-year-old Duncil.

"It was fun...the students were happy when we were there," he said. "Some of the students know me, some said their boys (older brother) watch me in the UAAP."

During his visit, Duncil gave a brief talk to the elementary students to emphasize the value of education.

### Stay in school

"I told them there will be more opportunities if they stay in school," said Duncil, a third-year Sociology student. "I told them to study well. If they don't, they might have few chances in the future."

Although he spent only a day with the kids, the enriching experience inspired Duncil to continue the good deed.

On his birthday on Jan. 13, Duncil plans to donate more school supplies to a public school in his hometown in Apalit, Pampanga.

"I hope I can give more next time, not just pencils but also notebooks," said Duncil. "This way we can make more kids happy."

# Real Spicy flashes old fiery form

By Marang B. Castillo

REAL SPICY, RIDDEN BY A JUNIOR JOB, YESTERDAY RAN DOWN A CLASSIC field to end the year the way he started it—with an overpowering performance.

The handsome four-year-old shot out of traffic entering the final 800 meters en route the year-ending P3 million Philracom Classic Open championship under Lester U. Ballesa in record-equalling style over Empire King.

Real Spicy matched the record for 2,000 meters despite a loose and slow turn-in mile clocking two minutes and 8.6 seconds with quarters of 27, 26, 26, 26 and 27 to win P1.8 million and pick up his career earnings past the P9.0-million mark.

The newest superhorse needed to dig deep to escape the 12th straight win of the year as Ballesa applied the whip insistently in the final stretch.

Just off at the outstanding last choice in the eight-horse field, Real Spicy went by more than six lengths over Empire King, the John D. Corfinio-owned chestnut who made a move to partner with the eventual winner in the backstretch.

Imports Five Mine Mine and Wild Dr. Dial set a torrid pace at the start with Ballesa keeping Real Spicy in fifth spot before turning up the heat entering the final two quarters going with Empire King, a former Gold Cup winner.

"I think he [Real Spicy] can't be better than Wind Bloom, when he saw me is done," owner Hermie Esguerra told the jockey. "And the crowd love him, too."

Comparisons to superhorse Wind Bloom, whose Esguerra retired to stud two years ago, are now being raised. But the sportsman businessman ready to disagree, saying to the way Real Spicy dispatched yesterday's field.

"Wind Bloom defeated the great imports one at a time, and it turn like that, you see strategist," Esguerra added. "I'm like to find Spicy's race all the love in.

SUPER HORSE! Real Spicy heads for home unchallenged.

HERMIE Esguerra (center), owner of Real Spicy, lifts the Philracom Classic Cup.

point and looks more in the race and he beat Dixie off."

Wind Bloom, who set the race twice and perennially all the big races in his career, amassed more than P19 million in prize money and was one of the most charismatic champs ever seen on the tracks.

Longshot Glory and Honour shot out from the rail of the pack to salvage third place, another two lengths behind Empire King for P975,000 with Unmovie checking in fourth for P390,000.

# Benson top pool shark in Pacquiao tilt

GRAVELLER PALCE RESIDENT OVERPOWered Michael Laguna, 10-4, in the finale Saturday to rule the "New Year Tournament, Handog ng Manny Pacquiao" and pocket the top prize of P50,000 in the Rack 'n Roll Billiard Café in Ermita, Manila.

Organized for the Filipino-boxing hero by many-time Philippine 8-ball shot champion Julie Clemente and Nick Espinosa, the 10-ball knockout format drew 167 players.

Pacquiao, an avid pool player himself, put up the total prize pot of P1 M,000.

On the way to the finals, Benson beat Boboy Rider, Kris Caldeiro, Jomar Sudarisa, Noel Bagalio and Jil Barleses.

Laguna settled for the runner-up prize of P30,000. He forged the finals duel with Benson after downing Rosalan Petina, Sonny Del Rosario, Mike Tabayoyon, Edgar Muñoz and PJ Maclima, in that order.

Other notable pool sharks who competed in the tournament were 2006 Sydney Pro-AM Junior 9B8 player Jeremiah David, Edgar Sarsa, Rolando Garcia, Israel Bais, Roberto Ily, Tarzy Labrador, Johnson Vito, Benjie Dorotan, Tonsy Ouano, Ruy "Cesabian" Tuvanes, Jerry Halayo and Mark Mendoza.

Organizers said PI million in total cash prizes will be at stake in the new tournament, slated in February in San Antonio City, Pangasinan's hometown, with the winner getting P500,000.

For inquiries, call Dorsaria at 0918-2130614. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

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BUSINESS
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# DBP opens credit line for Mindanao farmers

## P500-M fund meant to encourage shift to banana production

By Doris C. Dumlao

STATE-OWNED DEVELOPMENT Bank of the Philippines has opened a P500-million credit facility for Mindanao-based farmers who are shifting to the production of banana for export.

The credit line is expected to benefit at least 375 farmers, paving the way for the development of more than 1,100 hectares of land into banana farms and help boost the country's export earnings by about $11 million, DBP president Reynaldo Oneral said in a press conference.

Oneral said the facility would provide up to P1.33 million in loan per farmer-borrower without equity requirements. However, borrowers should have a viable project size not exceeding three hectares. Interested farmers will be given a customized repayment plan, with 11 months grace period on interest payments and a one-year grace on principal. They may avail themselves of the facility through any of the 64 branches of DBP's thrift-based bank, the Network Bank, which is also the country's biggest rural bank.

In the meantime, DBP also signed a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Agriculture, the Cagayan State University (CSU), the provincial government of Cagayan de Oro and the local government of Lilo-an in Cagayan for the development of a joint forestry program.

DBP 66

CURRENCIES
PESO-DOLLAR RATE
STOCK MARKET
PSE COMPOSITE INDEX
Markets closed for New Year break
FINANCIAL MARKETS ARE CLOSED TODAY for a regular holiday.
Share prices closed 1.3% percent higher last Friday for the best finish in almost 10 years due to continued bullishness over the economic prospects for 2007, dealers said.
The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 20.16 points or 1% percent at Friday's high of 1,982.34. It earlier hit a low of 1,948.84 points.
It is now 46.5% higher than its April 7, 1997 record carried at 2,992.08. AFP

# Exporters urged to do more business with E. Asian nations

By Ronnel W. Domingo

LOCAL EXPORTERS NEED TO DO MORE business within East Asia to take advantage of efforts toward freer trade and economic integration that would, in turn, make the region a global growth center, the Philippine Exporters Confederation said.

"The future of Philippine exports is in Asia," said Philexport president Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis Jr. "If Filipino exporters do not simply look east, they should go east."

With Luis' said recent developments in the region, particularly East Asia, pointed to a rapid increase in intra-Asian trade and the fast integrating regional economy.

The past six years saw Philippine exports to other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Hong Kong and China grow rapidly, he said.

Philexport believed that the recovery of the Japanese economy as well as the ramp-up of the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement would boost Philippine exports bound for markets within the region.

"Work will be gained early in January when the Asean summit will finally push through," he said. "Ongoing talks between the Asean group and Japan, China, South Korea and India on region-wide economic cooperation are bound to be accelerated after the summit."

"It would be wise to gain foothold in big and growing prosperous markets soon if you are not yet there," Ortiz-Luis advised exporters.

He said further that if exporters, particularly those from Central and Southern Luzon, took advantage of the opening up of the fast growing East and South Asian markets, they would be well-positioned to be the Next Tigers.

BUSINESSWORLD /B3

# Stocks seen rising further in '07

## Analysts cite sound fundamentals, low bank interest rates

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FUND MANAGERS AND ANALYSTS SEE A lot of reasons to be bullish about 2007.

Low interest rates due to the improving deficit numbers, the government's rule of key power assets and sustained robustness that usually boosts consumer spending are seen prompting to further boost the stock market this year.

"It's another good year for us, all things being equal," Edgar Semrod, head of research at MDR Securities Securities said.

In 2006, the Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) rose 42.2 percent, with average daily turnover increasing to P2.32 billion from P1.56 billion in 2005.

This happened despite a year marked by successive coup attempts, higher crude oil prices, super typhoons, a US interest rate hike, and political strife against changes in the Philippine Constitution.

What investors are also looking forward to this year are a corporate earnings growth of between 15 and 20 percent, and heightened activity among banking circles due to mergers and acquisitions led by Banco de Oro and Equitable PCI Bank, Semrod said.

The sale of state power assets is also going to give power related stocks a boost, analysts said.

Recently, the consortium of eTeeth, Power Corp and Hopewell's SB Power submitted the highest bid of $586 million for the state-owned 360-megawatt Magat Hydropower plant, the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (PSALM) said.

The Aboitiz group's bid topped the $485.9-million offer of First Gen Corp, according to PSALM, which is handling the sale of power generation and transmission assets of National Power Corp.

The government is scrubbing the bids mapped out Red Mountain power plant in Zambales followed by the termination of its water purchase agreement with the previous winning bidder, DNE Pacific Consortium Inc.

Allan Ta, vice president at Metrobank Trust Banking Group, said government's expected infrastructure spending this year should also bode well for construction and consumer firms, the ones also bullish on property stocks this year, due to the low interest rates that allow property firms to borrow funds for expansion activities.

As election year is also expected to increase spending, which is good news for consumer stocks, such as San Miguel Corp and Ayala Corp.

Ted Joseph Cauton, chief investment officer at BF Investment Management Philippines Inc. and concurrently president of the Fund Managers Association of the Philippines, expect the stock index to grow by 20 percent, in line with his earnings growth forecast of 20 percent in 2007.

"We expect a 20 percent growth in corporate earnings and the market to be on track with that earnings growth to hit 3,500," Garcia said.

A TRADER plays with balloons in front of photographers to celebrate the closing of markets at the Philippine Stock Exchange on Friday. The benchmark PSE Index advanced 29.16 points or 1.1 percent, to 2,903.54, its best finish since April 7, 1997. ...

# BSP expects net 'hot money' inflows in '06 to hit $2.7B

By Doris C. Dumlao

NET PORTFOLIO INVESTMENTS ARE SEEN to hit $2.7 billion in 2006, up from the previous year's $2.1 billion, as investor appetite for local stocks and government debt paper sustained strong during the year given the country's improved macroeconomic fundamentals, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said net portfolio "hot money" inflows for the whole of 2006 likely exceeded the institution's earlier forecast of $2.1 billion by about 20 percent.

The influx of foreign portfolio investments also helped lift the peso to its year highs, closing at 49.19 to $1 during the last trading day on Friday.

Based on reports from foreign banks, which are the major custodians of foreign funds, net portfolio inflows reached $2.55 billion from Jan. to Dec. 15, already exceeding full-year level in 2005.

"This is good because it shows continued investor confidence [in the country]," Guinigundo said.

As of the second week of December, Guinigundo said there was at least $928 million in foreign investments generated by the initial public offering of PSOC Energy Development Corp.

PSOC-EDC, with proceeds of around P9.67 billion, is the largest privatization effort done through the stock market since oil refiner Petron Corp. was initially sold in 1994, Guinigundo said.

Almost 40 percent of the total portfolio inflows went to the stock market while 15 percent went to government securities, and barely fazed easy treasury notes or T-Bills.

The strong portfolio investments inflows, along with remittances from overseas Filipino workers, had helped the BSP accumulate more dollars and build up the gross international reserves (GIR) and net international reserves (NIR) surpluses.

The GIR is an indicator of a country's ability to service the foreign exchange requirements of the economy consisting of the BSP's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, foreign instruments and special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund.

The NIR on the other hand, measures the foreign exchange transactions between the domestic economy and the rest of the world.

## 600MW in new power capacity eyed

By Abigail L. Ho

FOREIGN INVESTORS HAVE expressed interest in putting up at least 600 megawatts (MW) in additional power generating capacity this year, said Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla.

Power firms include expansions of existing power generation facilities as well as greenfield or new projects, he said, adding that much of the new capacity would be placed in the power-hungry Mindanao grid.

"We're looking at some upcoming projects in Mindanao. For some of those projects, (such as the one involving the Agus hydropower complex), we hope we'll be able to settle the land issues," he said in a briefing.

He said the existing Agus power facilities should be improved, while the yet-to-be-constructed Agus 7 facility should soon be added to the hydropower complex.

Lotilla declined to name the investment sides would be investing in new capacity, as well as where the new capacity would be put up.

Asked whether the winning bidder for Khalid-based Mitsui Corp.'s Philippine assets, the joint venture between Marubeni Corp. and Tokyo Electric Power Co., would be further expanding the existing Mirant plants here, he said it was "premature."

## Japanese companies turn negative on RP

By Rommel W. Dumlogo

JAPANESE FIRMS' CONFIDENCE in the Philippines swung back to negative after just two months of favorable ratings, a survey showed, also felt more bullish about neighboring Asia in December.

According to a monthly survey of the Japan External Trade Organization, Japanese firms operating in the country saw a net figure of 4.5 owing in last month's poll following a two-month recovery from a 17-month negative term.

Still, the survey showed that confidence overall fluctuate to a positive 11.1, tating in the next two to three months.

Jetro's monthly diffusion index survey showed that business sentiment for the country was weakened while ratings for Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia—which fighter down the negative side...improved.

Thailand's rating declined to -60.8 from -20, Malaysia's to from 10.1, and Indonesia's to 7.4 from 9.0.

Like the Philippines, regional leader Singapore's rating fell, but still further up the ladder at 13.6 from 13.4.

The ratings measure year-on-year changes in business outlooks for the current month and the following two or three months.

Ratings are expressed as diffusion indexes, which show the difference between positive and negative responses.

Jetro Jetro started the poll in June 2001. Philippine companies surveyed at surgeries 46.9 in December of that year and peaked at 22.9 in September 2004 before dipping to negative territory.

Jetro explained that the aim of the survey was to provide up-to-date information on business conditions in the Asian economy to help companies develop more effective business strategies.

Firms were asked to compare earnings prospects, supply and demand, inventory, sales prices and investment conditions with the same period a year earlier.

Philippine-based respondents in the August survey included 190 firms engaged in businesses involving oil, chemicals, steel, metals, electric and electronic machinery, transportation machinery and other manufacturing concerns as well as communication, real estate, transport, communication, commerce, services and other nonmanufacturing activities.

## DBP opens credit line for Mindanao farmers

From page B1

into a model agribusiness project showcasing modern agri-fishery technology.

Uson said the project would consist a 100-hectare farm area in Sta. Cruz, Cagayan, into consolidated landlay that would promote the conservation of natural resources and sustainable crop production practices.

The project is expected to gen-

erate at least 300 new jobs and benefit 372 new households in the area. It is also seen to promote multi-line processing and marketing facilities, and improve farmto-market roads linking the farmgate to local markets.

The DBP-CSE farms project was launched last year. It started with 101 hectares of mixed plantation and was later expanded to 102 hectares.

## Exporters urged . . .

From page B1

Central and Northern Luzon are chosen as these markets through the metro-based area ports of Subic in Olongapo and Batangas City, La Union, and Cebu City, La Union, as well as the international ports of Laoag and Clark.

Philexport earlier projected that total export earnings in 2006 would exceed the growth forecast of 10 percent although the strongest peso and the expected softening in major markets worldwide would mean slower growth in 2007.

As of end-October, total exports reached $29.35 billion. For the whole year, the target was set at between $47 billion and $48 billion, which translates to an overall export growth of between 11 percent and 13 percent.

# INFOTECH

PLAYERS can sing along with Pull Out Boy's "Dance, Dance" and 24 other hits in "Singstar Rocks!" for the PlayStation 2.

## Rockin' in the new year with musical games

WASHINGTON...IT'S NEW Year's Eve. The champagne's been uncorked, and everyone has sung "Auld Lang Syne," whether they know the words or not. Isn't it time to jazz up the party with some better music? And whether you're a singer, a guitarist or a dancer, there's a video game to suit your talents.

One of the best party games this year is Redwood's "Guitar Hero II," which lets two people at a time indulge in some serious shredding. We've already reviewed it (it's awesome), so here are a few more musical games to wake up your New Year's hangover.

"Singstar Rocks!" (Sony, for The PlayStation 2, $49.99): In Europe, the "Singstar" series has been attracting karaoke fans for a few years now. "Singstar Rocks!" is the franchise's U.S. debut, and it's strong enough to rival for Konami's popular "Karaoke Revolution."

It's simple enough for any partygoer to understand: Pick up the microphone, pick a video and start singing along with the pros. You're scored based on how closely you match the timing and pitch of the original, you can actually sing an octave lower or higher and still get top points.

Three PlayStops includes two microphones (which plug directly into the PS2), you can sing duets or go head-to-head against another singer, and a "pass-the-mic" challenge lets up to eight people play.

The 30 tunes, ranging from familiar favorites like Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive" to recent rock hits like The Killers' "Somebody Told Me," are many (but enough for most parties, but real karaoke junkies will be heading for more. Two discs and of hits.

"Elite Beat Agents" (Nintendo, for the DS, $34.99): The hippest heroes to hit video games in a long time are the Elite Beat Agents, three freaky dudes who solve global crises through dancing.

When a harried baby editor sends a female, chirpy corps in on the case of Stereogum's "Walkie Talkie Man." They swoop a couple of dopewrecked debutantes to the beat of Madonna's "Material Girl." They help a surfer find zombies to music with a medley of the Village People's "CRUISE." (Why not "In the Navy"?).

All the tunes are cover versions, unfortunately, but they're all low-capped with the kind of uptempo beats that make for a good rhythm game.

The object is to tap or slide your stylus on the DS screen in time with the music for most of the beats and the agents will woo the day.

Most of the missions require some practice before you can win, but you'll probably want to watch the screens again over after you have them, thanks to their vibrant, silent, hilarious comic-book style. There are 16 in all.

"Gitaroo Man Lives!" (Koei, for the PlayStation Portable, $39.99): The reluctant hero of this game is a kid named Ukiteru U. 1, who turns into Gitaroo Man after his talking dog bonks him a magical instrument.

The kid has to use his guitar skills to fight alien invaders, like a bee-suit wearing trumpet player and a melancholy-looking robot. You can unlock cheats by tapping the PSP's buttons as they are displayed on screen, although to play really only helps you need to hold down a button while moving the directional pad between areas.

Sounds simple, but it takes a lot of coordination to time your riffs just right. The hyperkinetic visuals will remind some players of the 1990 classic "Parappa the Rapper," while the music—all written especially for the game—evokes a good variety of genres, from disco to jazz to classical. Two stars. AP

# Year of Fire Boar brings luck to firms with computers

By Abigail L. Ho

IN THIS TECHNOLOGICALLY advanced age, it seems that there isn't much room for luck. But geeks sometimes do deviate from science.

This is why individuals and companies engaged in businesses that have something to do with computers may have a reason to smile in the year of the Fire Boar, as computer-related businesses are some of the hottest businesses in 2007.

According to Marissa Allen, certified feng shui expert and president of Wind of Feng Shui Inc., the year of the fire boar is very positive for those engaged in the metal and earth industries.

Computers, being classified as part of the metal industry, hold a great potential of generating wealth for owners of businesses related to them.

"There are a lot of interesting element combinations this year, so there's great potential to harness the prosperity luck," she said.

Computer-related businesses could involve the manufacture of computer components, as well as businesses that productively resolved the use of such machines.

Allen noted that despite today's technologically advanced age, there was always room for luck, especially one as "scientific" as feng shui.

"Feng shui is not superstition, nor religion, nor magic. We do a lot of research and it's based on scientific calculations," she said.

Information technology businesses and IT-enabled services, all businesses that predominantly need metal and specifically computers in their operations, have been the country's resilient industries these past years.

As of November 2006, more than 35 per cent, or 106 of the 411 projects approved by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority were IT-related, generating P8.73 billion worth of investments.

## Gadgets seen as best way to tell lies

LONDON—MORE THAN FOUR OF five people admit to telling little white lies at least once a day and the preferred way of being "economical with the truth" is to use technology such as mobiles, texts and e-mails, a survey out Thursday said.

The research by pollsters T2 Britain found that "technofriendship" was widespread with nearly 75 percent of people saying gadgets like Blackberries made it easier to fib.

Just over half of respondents said using gadgets made them feel less guilty when telling a lie than doing it face to face, the study on behalf of Nintendo Previews found.

The workplace was a favorite location for fibbing with 67 percent of the 1,467 respondents admitting they had lied at work.

The top lie was pretending to be ill (45 percent) followed by saying work had been complete, of when it hasn't (35 percent).

Worryingly for bosses, 18 percent said they lied to hide a big mistake.

But, employees were not the only ones on the receiving end of disingenuous statements.

Just over 40 percent said they had lied to their family or partner. Boy hopes to be about more; buying new clothes or the cost of them (37 percent), how good someone looked in something (26 percent) how much they had eaten (16 percent) and drunk (31 percent) and how much they weighed (12 percent).

The survey found that while people were dishonest, most told lies with the best intentions and to spare other's feelings.

But with hi-tech gadgets on the top of many Christmas lists (the best maybe everyone should optimally 'trace' down echoes for a few Tbs in the New Year. REUTERS

## Credit, loyalty cards' guard arrives in RP

By Rina T. Dizhonekar

A CARD DEVELOPED IN JAPAN that prevents data capture from credit cards and shoppers' loyalty cards is now in the Philippines.

The anti-skimming card, is now being tested in the Philippines by Smartlink and Globe Telecoms' partner Jemstone Shiboken from Osaka, Japan.

"Skimming is the unauthorized reading of RFID tags with credit card numbers, leading to identity theft. This allows unscrupulous persons to acquire personal and financial information of another person. Fraudsters can build cloned cards which they can use in unlicensed teller machines," Shiboken explained in an interview.

An RFID tag is a microchip that contains information such as a consumer's account number and PIN. RFID tags come in many forms, such as smart labels, bar codes, and embedded chips found in the E-Pass card, store debit and credit cards, loyalty cards, cash cards, and some PDB cards.

Shiboken said it has been observed abroad that a person with an RFID tag reader could move through crowds silently "skimming" data.

"Skimming is now a major concern in more developed economies but this does not mean it cannot happen in the Philippines," she said.

Shiboken said the anti-skimming card has been approved for use against identity theft by the Osaka government. She said her company was now coordinating with Philippine authorities to ensure the card locally prior to distribution.

"As anti-skimming card can be placed in wallets and purses to prevent data capture," Shiboken said. "It is an easy preventive measure and we will make sure it is affordable for consumers."

# UPS Foundation awards P1.8-million grant to Gilas

UPS PHILIPPINES ASSOCIATED A P1.8-million or $35,000 grant to one of the Ayala Foundation's projects—Gilas or Gearing-up Internet Literacy and Access for Students.

UPS's involvement in another charitable initiative was possible with the grant which was made through the auspices of the UPS Foundation, the charitable arm of UPS.

"UPS and its employees are committed to reach out to the less fortunate members of the community," said Napoleon Imbat, managing director of UPS Philippines at the Ellas Distal Award Ceremony "Our chair and CEO, Mike Eskew said, 'When the values and principles of communities and corporations are in lockstep, incredible things can happen.'"

The UPS grant will be used to fund hardware and software installation, and improve Internet connectivity in at least 18 public high schools in Pampanga, Muntinlupa, Cebu City, and Pasay City, where UPS offices are located. The close proximity also allows UPS employees to volunteer their time and talents to provide computer training for the teachers and students.

The grant is regarded as a significant step towards bridging the widening digital divide in the Philippines. According to Gilas, only about six percent of Philippine public high schools have tech-labs that give students training and access to the Internet. As of December 2004, only 2,096 or 36.3 percent of the country's 5,443 public schools were wired to the Internet.

Gilas envisions that the program will allow 5,760 public high school students to gain access to computer laboratories with Internet capabilities for computer literacy classes, research, and interactive learning programs. There are plans in the pipeline and they include increasing the number of schools and one-year lesson plan to ensure the optimal use of the computer facilities by the students.

Since its inception, the UPS Foundation has consistently acted on its three main areas of interest—preserving science stories, combating hunger and illiteracy. Last year, the foundation awarded grants amounting to P1.3 million or US$135,000 to help those in need. The recipients include the Boy Scouts of the Philippines, AWIGA Foundation, Bayanihan Center for Young Adults, PHILO Inc., Barangay Bhavid Foundation and Rotary Club of Quezon City.

## BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK HOSTS BROKER'S QUARTERLY BONUS

BPI Family Savings Bank volume is partnership with its pool of accredited brokers who refer housing loans to the bank. Shown at a recent Rewards package, Marites Cruz (far right) of the Amazing Triads' prepares to present housing brokers, for meeting certain benchmarks, (from left) Jocelyn Cruz, Jocelyn Cruz, Jocelyn Cruz,

BUSINESS Monday

Business features Editor Margie Quiroga Espino

# IT schools to adopt open source software

## Move aims to push use of nonproprietary and free programs

IN AN EFFORT to lessen the dominance of Microsoft and other giant information technology (IT) corporations on computer software applications, IT colleges and universities nationwide are now introducing Open Source software in their courses to enhance competencies and provide a better chance of career growth for their students.

Joseph Joel Gianghco, project lead of the Philippine Open Source Initiative (POSITIVE), says that this project gives Filipino programmers and network administrators the skills and tools to implement computer systems using non-proprietary Free and Open Source Software (FOSS).

"We have not seen any reluctance from IT schools in the country. They are very much interested as they now have the software tools to teach beyond theories without having to pay for license fees," Gianghco says of the schools.

Alex Thaens, president of the Philippine Society of IT Educators (PSITE) further says the initiative also supports the industry by building the supply lines of open source technologies. schools particularly the smaller ones will benefit on the cost savings from software licenses.

In a series of training sessions from April to October 2006, some 260 professors of computer courses from 113 schools nationwide participated in a hands-on train-the-trainer program sponsored by POSITIVE. Workshops were held in Baguio, Angeles, Cebu, Iligan, Davao and Ilocos Manila. The participating teachers were taught the necessary materials and tools to effectively teach the courseware to their students and advocate its use in their respective schools.

The courseware includes syllabi, presentation slides, instructor's guides, and laboratory and exercise workbooks for 5 college subject areas: IT Fundamentals, Operating Systems, Database Administration, Database Management Systems and Web Programming. These are made available for free to schools and universities through www.positive.ph.

To complement the training of students in open source technologies, POSITIVE aims to place at least 40 students from partner schools in internship programs with partner companies by the end of 2006. Of these, at least 20 students are expected to be fully employed upon completion of their university degrees.

POSITIVE is a public-private partnership project of the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and Wireless Services Asia in cooperation with the Philippine IT Services Center Foundation.

## Ways to make people feel like a million bucks

MAKING A MOVIE TO BE PROUD OF: Christmas movie classic, It's a Wonderful Life tells a beautiful story about the priceless value of relationships.

The story follows the life of George Bailey, a man who sacrifices his dreams to travel the world, instead choosing to stay in his hometown and run the family-owned business after the sudden death of his father.

Throughout the movie, George's humanity draws us into his life. As we watch him grow from a child to a young man, and then to a husband, father, and business owner, we see how George continually places the well-being of others ahead of his own interests.

Like George Bailey, most people can trace their successes and failures to the relationships in their lives.

As a leader, you can't be a loner. Your success is tied to inspiring a shared vision. In this edition of Leadership Wired, we'll explore eight practices whereby you can stay solid with others.

1. Let people know you need them.

When your dream is bigger than you are, you only have two choices: Give up or get help. Inspire others to join in the dream by letting them know they are needed. Every person has a longing to be significant; to make a contribution; to be a part of something noble and purposeful. Invite people into a vision, allow them to participate in making the vision a reality, and show them how their efforts are part of making a dream come true.

2. Create a memory and visit it often

Instead of accepting life's losses, take responsibility for pursuing dreams worthy of memory. Exercise creativity to push for remarkable achievements even when times are tough. Communicate defining moments through metaphors, and use the memories as symbols to celebrate accomplishments and perpetuate memories.

3. Give others a reputation to uphold

Form a high opinion of people and back that opinion by equipping and empowering them around you for eternal management.

When interacting with your people, don't allow them to be distracted by past failures; instead, steer them toward a promising future.

Have a picture of the potential you see inside of a person, and focus instead. On realization of that potential, and hold them accountable to be their best.

4. Share a career with someone

A Serbian proverb says, "Only the spoon knows what is stirring in the pot." When you allow another person to know what is stirring within you, giving them a "taste" of a plan or idea, you instantly make a meaningful connection with them.

5. Do for others what they can't do for themselves

As a leader, you have the precious responsibility of taking your people to places they could never reach on their own.

You can do this in three ways: Connection, motivation and interpretation.

First, take the time to connect your people into synergistic relationships they would never otherwise form.

Next, you'll be able to offer opportunities for people to join a team which will achieve more as a unit than any of its members could individually.

Finally, share your ideas, and by doing so, you'll empower knowledge that others do not possess on their own.

6. Find the keys to their heart

Discover the passions inside those you lead by asking questions about each person's dreams, values and strengths.

Accept and appreciate the fact that every individual is different, but commonly search for common ground to serve as a point of connection.

7. Practice the 30-second rule

Within the first 30 seconds of a conversation, look to say something encouraging to the person you're speaking with.

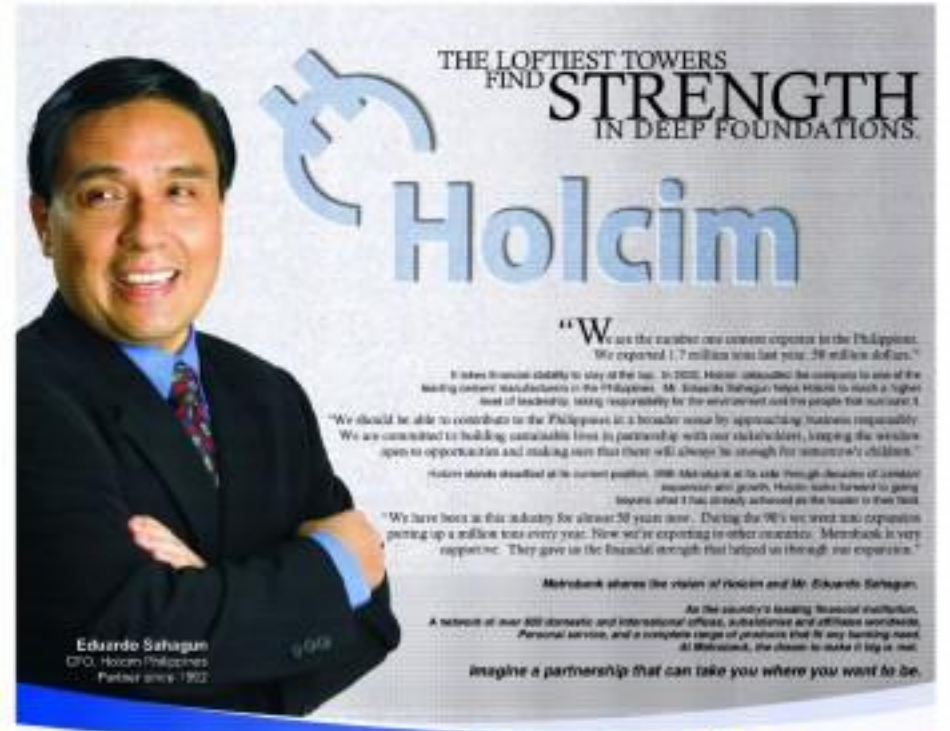
By doing so, you'll give others the Triple 'E' treatment: Attention, affirmation and appreciation. When you add to others, they'll be drawn to you.

8. Write notes of encouragement

Encouraging notes have a personal touch and represent an investment by the writer. Such notes are remembered by the recipient long after the writer has forgotten them.

If you want to reach the top, don't run over others. Likely, the only way you'll reach the top is to be carried there by others.

*For information on John Maxwell's in-house or public leadership or teamwork workshops, please email us at mimes@philippine.com or call 415-3646/2532 and ask for Jun or Bing. "JOHN MAXWELL (800)-6430 (Smart) to get daily JMU leadership insights from John Maxwell.*



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LIFESTYLE
Editor Gloria Bascal Fuentes
Selection Editor Lira B. Zulueta



ARTS AND DESIGN 2006

# Worst art of the year

**Compiled by Lira B. Zulueta**

## Ugly Goliaths

Hands down, the worst art of the year was the art of the giant billboard. They were the worst by sheer size (and there golf) although smaller bills and boards, such as those covered by politicians of all sizes—from the perfect hairstay exposés to the most preposterous mayor, governor, representative and senator—were just as bad. The giant billboards destroyed the landscape of Metro Manila and dwarfed everything around them, filling the space with their brazen ugliness.

Advertisers and politicians seemed to have conspired to impose their morbid ugliness on the people. Remember that at the wake of Typhoon Milenyo, which toppled billboards and exposed their innards to the public, the politicians rushed one another in clearing up to launch the giant advertisements. That was in October. Last month, barely two months after the political grandstanding, the billboards were back. With a vengeance.

The worst billboard of the year? Sweetlope, please. And the title goes to—the Iloilo Clinic billboard on Edsa, Guadalupe, Makati. It's as big as heaven (and for nothing does it occupy the Guadalupe promontory whether the prosperity of San Carlos Seminary of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Manila), and it's mounted as wide as space—or as wide as the stretched faces of the models on the billboard.

The billboard was terrible had not only be its sheer magnitude but also for its concept and styling. It showed the cosmetic surgeon and her beautiful creations—all alone his celebration—in strictly formal dress code, amid dreamy drapery and velvet leaves. The skill power and the gullible visions conjured illusions of the Addams Family or Malacañang Ferdinand's waterworks.

On the bright side, the billboard fully complemented the space around it. Together with the MRT, the Guadalupe Bridge, and the busy industries north and south of Pasig, the billboard and its subjects were a marvel of engineering—as eyesplitting.

## Overpricing

Aside from serious human aesthetic distortion, the top prices of not-so-established young artists in choked in the bidding, some at non artists demanded stiff prices for their works without any market basis, resulting in price distortions. Worse, the elder and established artists who pestered themselves as "the next National Artist," when more than women, influenced young artists under their mentorship to demand high prices, dampening several galleries promoting the works of emerging women. The situation showed how professionalizing the art regime in the country remained problematic, with big egos and deep greed, not craftsmanship or market dynamics, determining pricing.

## Global Pinay design

Bencmille Cobarrubias's triumph in the design for Asia Awards—in which his artist Lolek Chan shared top honors with designs from Hokkaido, Hamburg and Tokyo—as well as news that he was a favorite of Brad Pitt and he had been asked to design a set for the forthcoming "Ocean's 13" movie, showed that Philippine design had come of age. Designer by Bandji Lapuz, Rea Bautista and Tony Gonzales have also gained renown, establishing the Philippines as a global source of design. There's a need to sustain the momentum by state subsidy to enable designers and design houses to participate in trade fairs abroad. The education system, too, should promote industrial design as a course of choice for young design-inclined Filipinos.

## Elderly but still potent

Some senior artists don't seem to dry up of creative juices, as they never fail to muster exhibits of their most recent works with undiminished potency. Just when you think they've long been rolling in their laurels, you stumble on new works by the likes of Arturo Luz, Arsenal Kamol, Norberto Chabet, Mideng Santos. Even the nonagenarian Anita Magsaysay-Ho startles the art world now and then with a brilliant piece or two.

## Young but very, very strong

Upcoming artists and relative unknowns often come up with strong art that can hold a candle to works by veterans. At least, Jesse Ermeliño held his first solo show of expressionist

ABLAZE '52

# A blast from the arts

By Constantine C. Tejero

PHILIPPINE POLITICS may be a mess, film entertainment is on the brink, and the past will always be past, but the one thing still alive and kicking in the country all year round is the arts. A salute to the Filipino artist does for all, wage discerning of our thumbs up, way up.

## Elderly but still potent

Some senior artists don't seem to dry up of creative juices, as they never fail to muster exhibits of their most recent works with undiminished potency. Just

# A blast from the arts

from page 23

protests as power one couldn't look at them with equilibrium. One Marlon Magbanua sculptures with obvious hint of such theorems is should donate the dismay treacherously of a few overhyped abstractionists.

## Still on the frontline

Artists we haven't heard from for some time have returned to the scene. Cesare and Jose Marie Sajnos came back from abroad and unveiled their series of avant-garden installations and performances. Items we thought have stopped production, such as Nol Manzanilla and Alan Saraza, reappeared in group exhibits with interesting innovations on their respective art.

## Hearts of gold

Artists can always be relied on to raise funds for charity. Led by this year, Gabby Martinez enlisted nearly 100 artworks whose proceeds went to fulfill our unwritten pactum of the Philippine Children's Medical Center. This month, Jenny Pilapil and Nitz Pantaleon are exhibiting their sculptural pieces for the cause of Make-a-Wish and Kythe Foundation. This only underscores the fact that artists are really humanitarian at heart.

## Excitement of awards

The Thirteen Artists Award, now great for the Cultural Center of the Philippines every three years, proven to be as exciting as ever. Many of the members this year are certainly the same people the developments of whose trajectory we've been watching for some years now: John Bilasano, Jayson Oliveria, Lyra Mary Cunetiano, Gary Ross Pastrana, Leticia Cordero, Ma. Cristina Valdezco, Jocelyn Dong, Mariano Chang, Daniel Coquilla, Isaac Cabanglung, Ronald Ventura, Eugene Jacque and Renato Stone-Chang. The award can be more exciting than the National Artists Award as its choices hold an element of surprise while the latter's can often a foregone conclusion.

## VISUAL ARTS

**Rocha at Yellow Door**

Yellow Door Gallery and Power Plant Mall present "Carnival of Color," an exhibit of acrylic paintings by Carlos Rocha, until Oct. 13 at the Power Plant Mall. Rocha's paintings have evolved into works of art in fauvist style. His sculptures are expressive, exhibiting gigantic tension and movement. Call 830-9654/84.

**Anulacion exhibit**

Dr. Gregorio E. Anulacion recently had his one-woman exhibit "La Femme," Jan. 6, at the Anulacion Residence in Rockville Subdivision, Dasmariñas. "La Femme" is an 80 piece assemblage of paintings in soft pastel depicting women in their various forms and emotions. Her paintings, according to art master Antonio Soria, show gradations of luxurious tropics that exude a vivid color and verbal activity in her compositions.

**Lee at Pinxto**

Pinxto Art Gallery's SM Megamall in kicks off 2007 with Rommel Lee's "30 Lee Things Happen" opening Jan. 4. The exhibit, which portrays Lee's characteristic humor and irony, unleashes a gamut of whimsical expressions, from ... shoes symbols, statement shirts across one photo—that traffic is a dark, melancholy and unsatisfying silhouette of the imagination, bedazzled by light by the artist's well-edited and vivid strokes. Call 634-5411 or visit www.pinxtoart.ph.com.

**TAM Awards awards the late Christie's auction of modern and contemporary Southeast Asian Art at the International Auction Center at the Hong Kong Convention Center. With the artist (left) are Divine Aurelio, Divina Aurelio and art collectors John Wells and wife.**

**PORTRAIT artist William Cabag's "The Old Church" at the Ruth Art Gallery in Mangol-La Plaza presents depictions of historic churches. Photo shows the artist (third from left) with art collectors Antonio Dee, Tintin Bernabe and Dalton Bakas at the exhibit's opening.**

# Book immortalizes Premio Zobel

**HONORED C. Brillantes immortalizes the country's oldest literary award in her book "81 Years of Premio Zobel: A Legacy of Filipino Literature in Spanish." Photo shows Philippine Ambassador to Spain Joseph O. Bernardo, Georgina Padilla y Zobel (the book's publisher), Spanish Ambassador Ignacio Sagaz, Brillantes and Alejandro Padilla y Zobel.**

THE BOOK, "81 YEARS OF THE PREMIO Zobel: A Legacy of Philippine Literature in Spanish," written by Leandro Carrillo Brillantes, the Premio Zobel Awardee of 1998, and a member of the Academia Filipina de la Lengua Española, has been released.

The book is a publication of Georgina Padilla y Zobel, granddaughter of Don Enrique Zobel de Ayala, founder of the Premio, with the support of the Spanish Program for Cultural Cooperation.

With 81 years behind it, Premio Zobel is the oldest literary award in the Philippines. Don Enrique established the Premio to preserve and revitalize the Spanish language in the nation, and to honor and promote the best Filipino literary works in Spanish.

Included in the book are brief biographies of the awardees and excerpts from their winning works.

The awardees have been honored on various artistic and intellectual: Ernest Woodham, the invincible Salipsipan duo Bernabe and Bobinay, Leni Ma. Guerrero, Antonio Abad, Geovanni Ramirez, Enriquez, Lanuza.

Behind Kalaw-Lirio and honorable politicians collaborated in its success. Secretary Chair Mary Rocio, its brothers Mariano and Jesus Carmen, the late Ayuntamiento Ramon Ayala y Moya, Jorge Bocobo, Rafael Palma and Carlos P. Romulo, were members of its jury.

Copies of the book are available at Ayala Museum and at the Filipinas Heritage Library in the Makati Towers.

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# Art on top of the world

"FILIPINIANA Affinity"

"NEW YEAR'S Orchid"

"LOVE of Dragonflies"

By Constantino C. Tejero

ONE OF THE BEST IMPROBABLE places to see art is among the clouds.

That was what we stumbled into after zipping up to the 89th floor of Taipei 101, the world's tallest building, in 37 seconds via the world's fastest elevator.

In the indoor observatory there, encased on black pedestals in the middle of the circular lane around a gift shop and a drinks bar, is a glistening array of numerous sculptures in pure gold. This is the handiwork of Wu Ching, a Taiwanese Oddball's here is one.

These delicate pieces have been praised for their "touch of naturalness and emphasis on life that demonstrates the Eastern Zen." Imagine finely wrought gold brooches of vegetal and insect forms soaked in life. Our impression when we first saw them, in fact, was of exquisite filigree.

The motifs are faithful to Chinese nature painting: flowers, leaves, grey, dragonflies, beetles. What's astonishing is their rendering in pure gold and in such scale...and how anatomically correct they are, and how artsy the artist is (cut) to such noble material the

THE ARTIST'S hands craft: Lending statistical true perfection.

"PHOTO Orchid"

"PLANTAIN Love"

boundaries of known life forms!

In "Love of Dragonflies," the two insects in gold mounted on three spray stems are actually copulating. We're not sure how zoologically correct the actual positioning is, but we can't help but be impressed by the winding hieroglyphics that were once clear ragging and pulling of bulk and fluttering of wings.

The motifs of elements in nature to be sure, but into the soldiering of the actual act—looking as it is like a blend of homemaking and quaint, swaying between wrestling and embrace.

In "Paternal Love," two yellow objects suspend on black agate, the parent ant may be feeding, nursing or grooming its young, but the "sweet" at look as if they're fighting.

As noted by the exhibition catalogue: "The inner value of natural objects is the basis, material source of the design itself, as well as the core of self-reflection... Wu Ching's philosophy has been the true expression of nature and the demonstration of life that displays the beauty of natural simplicity."

The artist's careful observation of nature is truly remarkable—indeed, amazing perfection. Consider "Moth Orchid," where the meticulous







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ATOMO AND WEBBY — By Lyn Garcellano

DIVINE COMEDY — By Steven Panlilio

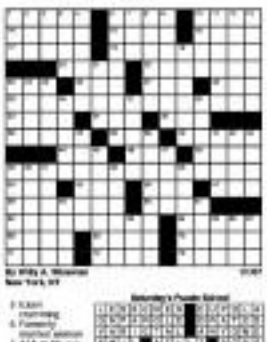
BIGO MACHINE — By Mayo Abrera

HEROKOMIKS — By Jomike Tejido

TULDOK — By Pavo and Totoy Hilario

BEN — By Daniel Shelton

## DAILY CROSSWORD



## HOROSCOPE

## CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green

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Difficulty Level ★

### HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

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Difficulty ★★★★★

# 2 artists celebrate year of hope and courage

By Gina Dantioquia
Correspondent

SHE BEGAN SEE JOURNEY PETS the recording of the commemorative centennial panel, called "Journey of Hope," a stunning piece she created for the Centennial Gala, an event the Filipino-American community staged at the Westin St. Francis Hotel, San Francisco.

The featured designer is Marissa Gonzalez, who prefers to sign her name MariGone, herself an accomplished painter, who went out of her way to help commemorate 100 years of Filipino migration to the United States. She is also the featured artist at the Asian Art Museum, which previously had such national icons as Jose Luna, Fernando Amorsolo and Fernando Zobel gracing its opening salutes. Her work captures the theme of diaspora and the pursuit of identity, as her oeuvre and movie "Filipinas Bring Home" symbolize.

MariGone's art career is subsumed in her work as jewelry, which she claims enables her clients to wear nostalgia for things done in the family celebrating love of country, faith in a Supreme Being.

Working in a photo-realist style, the last her paintings express the hopes and dreams of Filipinos everywhere. There is the queen quote, the diamond, to glorify the contributions of Filipinos to their host countries and to the world at large as well.

The blue sapphires represent the bodies of many Filipinos cremated and left behind to come to the New World. The precious stones stand for the Fil. ipino's bravery amid uncertainties, the emeralds in the golden stars and the solid gold for the firm foundations and stability as well.

The jewels she created became the centerpiece for the giant panels she knits in memory of Ivan Fernandez, Pompeyo, created for the Prince Christmas. The multi-layered panels—products of Filipino ingenuity and innovation—were displayed around the boutique area of the Santa Monica Mall in Westin. Like the jewels and the paintings she created, the tapestries are a unifying symbol of the brilliance and steadfastness of God's celestial creations.

**Romeo Gutierrez**

Over at The Fort, an exhibit at La Saudhi Boutique by veteran painter Romeo Gutierrez also shone during the Christmas holidays. The artist celebrated the Filipino-born Filipino family reunion and togetherness, returning to one's roots.

Departing from his more rigid forms, seen in recurring his trademark lines, Gutierrez had new inspiration to work on, particularly after a year of being on his own, a most trying period in his life that he has come to terms with.

The pieces have an overwhelming sense of gaiety ensconced in the artist's terra firma. The geometrical forms are nearly layered, their sense of rhythm spiritually structured and almost free-like modern compositions.

The viewers, subtly applied hue accenting and dynamic, are well-orchestrated by their creator, an element that is in tandem harmony with the overall scheme.

The artist, now in his 60s, seems to have been finally released from his comfort zone, unleashing a flurry of new ideas and concepts. This is, in art lingo, a period of introspection, a time when all of us will do well to engage in as the world is a breath away from the new year.

Looking back at the past, we are bereft of what the future holds for us, or, better still, of what we shall make out of the present.

E-mail author at gdantioquia@yahoo.com

THE GUESTS of honor at Nelle Lleng's (third from left) first solo exhibit "Tuwa, Bulan & Puso" at Galerie Joaquin include (from left) Kalaw Arroyo, Cebu Mayor Tommy Osmeña; artists Zig de Pio and Jodi Cuhi; owners of the artist Francisco Alba, former ambassador to the Vatican Pete Jimenez, the artist's son Miko. The show was curated by Gina Dantioquia.

## Photo exhibit at Greenhills

THE JEWELLERY GALLERY ON THE 400-Level floor of Greenhills Shopping Center is holding "Sarkaseng Bato: Photographs on Jewellery," a photo exhibition. The photos center life stories, culture, urbanscapes and still life. The photographers are members of Bathaluma, a photo-sharing site created by Yahoo!. The show runs until Dec. 31.

## Jail minors' art

THE CULTURAL CENTER OF THE PHILippines presents "Symphony in 3 Minor: Incisive artworks with thinners from Jail" until Jan. 14. The exhibit showcases the product of an art therapy workshop conducted by Dawna Miguel for young detainees at the city jail in Muntinlupa 2004. There are expressions of young artists' fears, hopes and dreams. There other works were also exhibited at the Manila City Jail, University of Santo Tomas' Benito Angeles Gallery and the ASIA Museum. Call 832-1702.

"LEFT by"

## Wesley Valenzuela's iconoclasm . . .

From page C6

capitalism. He puts down master narratives that have been held sacred with narratives of his own, manufacturing personal constructs through hybridization that fit his consumerist taste or mind-set.

The betrayal occurs here, in the role of the murdered icon involved upon another icon waiting to be killed, which is his own mirrored reflection. No wonder there appears to be wrestling down by signed by him with multiple signature. The ideally symmetrical shape evokes twisted sameness and endless reproduction.

It capable comes as no surprise that the third canvas is "Untitled," for this third space of hybridity—neither simply East nor West—is still waiting to be named, and probably for good measure, for the security set of hermeneutic self-assurances object unbendability.

To baptize is to give essence, identity, to give it the parameters within which it can move without compromising its constructed nature, and by virtue of its inherent monolithicness, this mental mandala is free to allow the mountain-halal to stalk out its consumerist eye and voraciously stare at the crotch of a new (i)made-divinity sitting on the head of the sacred bull, but Machismo hasn't floating in her objectified dress and by low how the flaming skull of punks, bearded bikers, and possibly homosexual's own Ghost Rider.

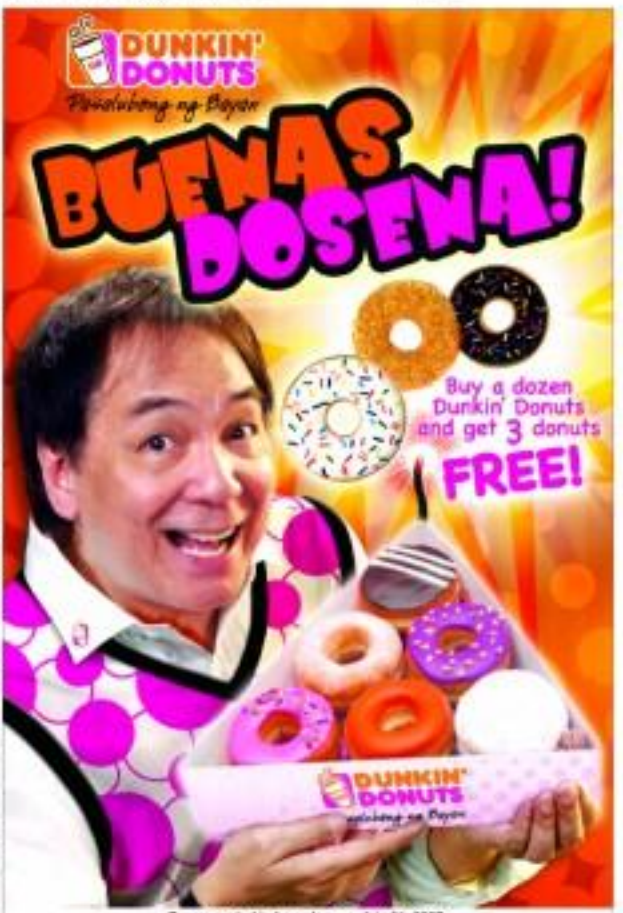
The dream of attaching old iconoclasm is more dramatically, though less subtly, visualized in "Mask of the Gods," in which a woman riding a pig on the right of the lengthwise painting shrouds the circular mandala on the left, the former DADS-DD-DY spread across the canvas.

Thus the side of the pig unpopularly alludes to popular culture via the infamous Nora Aunor declaration "Walang himala!" denies our attitude a loss of instrumental belief, but rather the mantle of belief to and in a different situation, which is possibly the capitalist church of the consumer, a synagogue whose wallpaper is cash.

The spread elegantly preserves the cultural/economic issues raised by the artist, thanks to the impetus of using forms of hybridity both critiqued and embodied by the show.

Valenzuela himself demonstrates hybridity by showcasing in his fourth show not just technical skill but critical awareness as well, revealing painting to be a highly eligible site of visual discourse. But in spite of all the questions the show has raised whether in terms of ideology or consumerism, "Urban Apocalypse" is, in the end, really a question of faith: Christ said capital, belief and betrayal, icon and the loss of referentiality—do you really completely buy into any just one of that?

"Urban Apocalypse" is ongoing in The Big & Small Art Co. at the Art mall, 3/F Bldg. 4, UP Magsaysay.



"UNTITLED"

"WAR I'll of the Gods"

# Wesley Valenzuela's iconoclasm in late capitalism

By Angelo P. Suarez
*Contributor*

SOME SAY THE DEVIL TAKES a chance but we say it's the Church. Wesley Valenzuela's fourth one-man show, "Urban Apocalypse," not only charms but is itself a set of charms—as if every large canvas was a wall-based amulet, each of the appropriately four paintings overpainting new myths from the Bruegelian canon, in pagan-Christian counterpoint. Or not so much amulets but mandalas, what with three of them coarsely exhibiting runaway wheels gray clubmosses evoke the newspaper texture they've painted on.

## Christmas and capital

Fun there is balance (replete there are opposites to be balanced). Could it be mere coincidence that "Urban Apocalypse" in its metropolitan madness runs the spirit of the lesbian season—Christmas swallowing one such peaceful pastoral portrait in the Nativity—so down it eat the dome's own stomach?

One almost sees this Holy Infant in "Of Machines and Men," around His head a halo of flame, grown-up though shavers and crowned not with thorns but marshmallow, the mark on His chest making Him a veritable Jesus Christ Superstar.

At the center of His torso is a lettering busy hustle, and from the sides of His pelvis sun emanate rams with the emblem of the Eye—a mass-produced icon of God's omniscience—or, shall we say, of multinational companies, the gods of capitalism, voyeuristic in their knowledge of consumerist habits?

The glassy consumerism floating in repose at the foot of the figure yields no response, uncaring, yet serene in form position, at once an allusion to "Star Wars" and a telling paradox of the neither of Zen.

The theme of dichotomy gets complicated when man-and machine constitute a hybrid in "Lest We Forget," the severed arced of the wife a thin, life-edged sword as it evokes "life" in both physical pain and psychedelic high (dichotomy of mind and body). At the core of the canvas is the urbanite Shiva holding guns and knives, on his chest a visible grayscale heart, the hand a horrible jeopardy whose wheels are on fire.

The hybridity is cultural, the imagery skews—the military remains of American colonial rule (prisoners of capital) appropriated by us as Hindu vehicle for transport—is a collision of East and West. Brennan mandalas are usually graphic devices used in Eastern spiritual traditions. Here accumulations of Western iconography, particularly on this canvas, echoes the explosions of the same cultural collision.

But this isn't so much an accidental collision as a deliberate one, working almost of macabre with both guns aimed at another familiar Western religious image. Shiva appears bent on shooting at the mass-produced faces of the divine supplicant nearby.

The painting seems to ask, Could Christmas be the story of Christ's last trip—the birth not of the iconic icons but the icon of Jesus, a divine-child no more or less already dead God? The current obsession of Christ marks His mortality. That his myth is embedded in story—we know as ritual not as tale—makes him susceptible not only to multiple interpretations but endless deconstruction as well.

## Belief and betrayal

This is what constitutes the traitorous irony of Valenzuela's iconoclasm in the age of late

RETURN TO

"Of MACHINES and Men"

MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 2007 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER D1

# LIFESTYLE

THE CAST of "Beyond the Physics" ("Balot'ng Ta," with playwright-director Chiang Weiling (in white shirt))

# Best shows of the last quarter of 2006

By Amadis Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

THERE ARE NOW MORE INtimate, smaller venues for the performing arts which serve as an alternative to the behemoth that is the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Greens among these the Ideal Publishing Hi Center (Araneta Avenue, QC), where the high presence of the music is Esther Vilad; Bistro Hous (Blue Ridge, QC), where the babysitter is environmentalist soiree organizer Odette Bustos-Alcantara; the Francisco Santiago Hall (PGH, Espitalde, Mkt); and even the Philamlife Theater in Manila, which auditorium (CCP).

At the Ideal Penthouse Theater, veteran actor Francisco Aseniero, handling fewer and a cold, nevertheless gave a credible performance, while young and sexy soprano Annes Pelero belted out arias from "Carmen." A few days later, the two were on a tour of Europe with other members of Filipino Pinoys: pianists Beyond de Reyes and Sonia Reyes.

At Heritage House, the baritone Stagers and the Ateneo boys of Humanities professor Jun M. de Leon serenaded guests at a recital, with baritone par excellence Alex Rivera (pronounced Reevi) on the guitar.

Also performing in this and other venues were the busy trio of young operatic singers associated with violinist Jupee: pianist Julie Mendoza; bel canto tenor Jun Belaseverde Hontiveros Chanel, Emily's fellow-tenor Donald Ong (fresh from the UP College of Music); and soprano soprano Mirasi Fidalgo Ubosh from Glasgow Hall, CCP).

They even performed at Ness Park for one concert, young saxophonist Timmy Cheng, 13, almost stole the show), and at the commemorative dinner-concert of my mentor de Manila High School Class (Batch 19-August-not) at the Manila Golf Club, along with the Ateneo Alumni Glee Club.

Speaking of alma maters, the alumni (some of them coming from abroad) of the Philippines High School for the Arts in Mt. Makiling, Laguna, gave a touchingly successful concert (at the Francisco Santiago Hall) to raise funds for their school, which was severely damaged by super typhoon Milenyo.

At the Francisco Santiago Hall, pianist Jonathan Arevalo Cua (who also sang in the opera "Eugene Onegin") and soprano Annie Go enjoyed a delightful romp ("meandering") through the music of Mozart, one of the many tributes here and abroad to the supremely gifted Austrian composer on his 250th birthday anniversary.

The University of Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music's "Eugene Onegin" lived up to its hype, and was a memorable production.

World-caliber soprano Isabelle Geraldan and the rest of the cast proved that they can emote as well as sing (in Russian, at that). Baritone Andrew Fernando was vocally impressive as Eugene but physically did not look the part, being round. To top it all, he was made to wear a wig that did not become him.

Tchaikovsky's music was not at par with his power compositions but the ballet and his symphonies.

"Aha, G," a presentation of Peta (Philippine Educational Theater Association) and the Metropolitan Teen Theater League, in cooperation with the Spanish Program for Cultural Cooperation, was a rather lite-ear recitation

TENOR Jun Pesayenta

on a theme by Cervantes, and often mystifying to the oldies not familiar with computer games. It's a good thing the audience was 99.9 percent students.

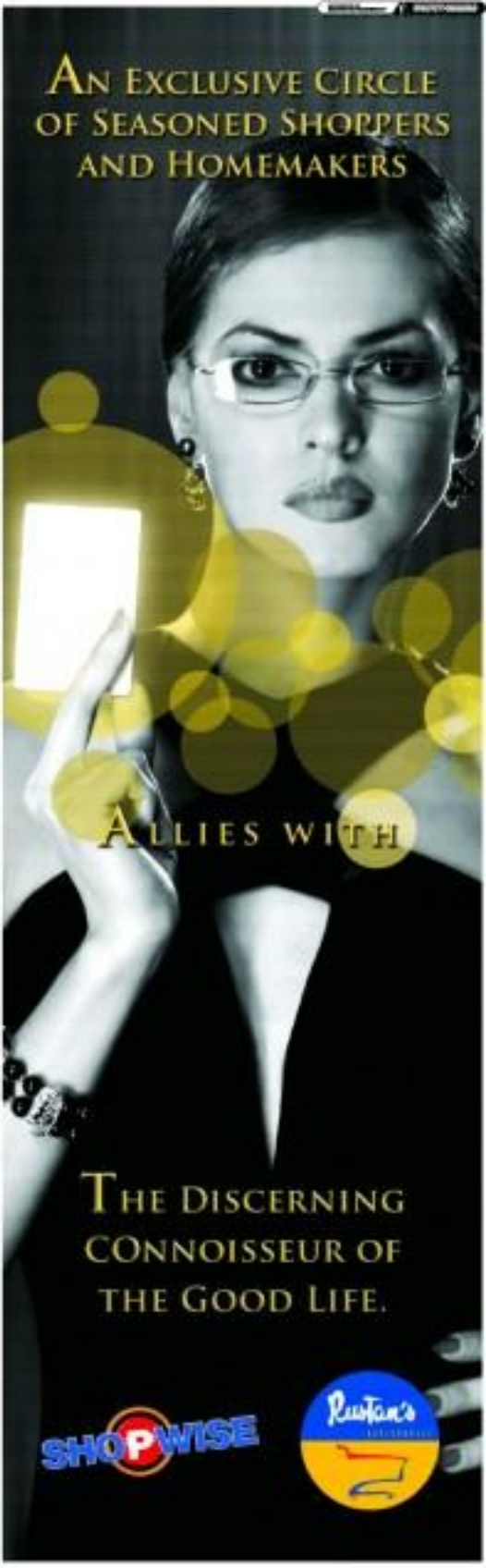
The play, directed with lyrics by Chris Millado, was a telling social commentary on the current Filipino diaspora, as Pinoys continue to seek a better life abroad, sometimes at great cost (as in acquired dyslexia and failed marriages). The characters moved around like robots, free from the human touch, as if they were on a chessboard by computer games.

The musicality of poet-by-plump Lea Salonga, now more mature because of motherhood, was evident during the latter's concert ("Tomorrow" at the CCP) for traumatized children. And—surprise!—the now single Filipina sings beautifully.

The soloists at the Pepsi 2006 Classics (at the CCP)—Filipino pianist Antonio Jim mented Cruz and Japanese flutist Ayako Ishigaki—were technically brilliant. Orchestra Jal Japan), under the baton of the charismatic Tatsuya Shimono, no longer having to play second fiddle (pun not intended) to the soloists, really ran home, brought the house down, and brought the audiences (from Bulacan) 2 to orchestra) to their feet.

Cebu-born pianist Albert Tiu (now Singapore-based), in Mandarin attire, proved his mastery of the keyboard again with a rendition of Rachmaninoff's challenging "Rhapsody on a Theme" by Paganini (at the CCP), with the formidable Philharmonic conductor Christ no Toledo directing the Metro Manila Com-

HARMONY Boys of choirmaster Jun M. de Leon: T. Bolanos, D. Ong, J. del Pilar and A. Ibis

# Home for the arts and culture in Cagayan de Oro

By Mel Pagalanan
Contributor

**FEEDBACK&ENCES galore. A string quartet serenades theatergoers on opening night.**

**RODELSA Hall, the first theater for the performing arts in Mindanao**

WHEN THE PHILIPPine Army decided to hold the annual National Philippine Army ROTC Speech Contest outside Metro Manila for the first time ever, they chose to hold it at Rodelsa Hall of Liceo de Cagayan University in Cagayan de Oro City.

"Outside Metro Manila, your theater impressed us with its world-class and high-tech facilities and services," declared Major Ted Barupit, the resource Technical Officer who served as the Presidential Directory for the ROTC Speech Contest.

The town commandants representing the various regions throughout the country converged in Cagayan de Oro a few days ago for the prestigious competition. Cadette Olivia H. Cagas, a 19-year-old 3B Elementary Education undergraduate at the Isabela State University, emerged as the competition champion.

Several plays went to Cadet Edward Brian Kent S. Morales, a nursing student at the Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology. Third placer was Cadet Alvira John Rabaynal, with Secondary major in Filipino at the University of Southern Mindanao in Kabacan, Cotabato.

The contestants were hosted by Maj. Gen. Jose T. Rodriguez, commanding general of the 4th Infantry Division at Camp General Edilberto Evangelista in Sumilao, Bukidnon.

Welcoming the military persons at Rodelsa Hall, university president Rodolfo Pelaez Gales said, "This occasion is special for two reasons. It is the first time that the event is held outside Metro Manila. And it is the first time Rodelsa Hall is hosting a speech contest."

He further said, "We are proud to partner with Liceo de Cagayan University, an important institution in Mindanao, for this event. This venue is perfect."

Liceo U. inaugurated Rodelsa Hall—named after Rodolfo Pelaez and wife Elisa (the university's founders)—in February 2005 to mark the university's 50th Foundation Day.

And in such a short span of time it has staged an exciting mix of performances, from the daring "Angina Monalegrian" (9 Day 2006) to the spellbinding solo concerts of the Spanish classical guitarist Jorge Orozco (in cooperation with Instituto Cervantes through a grant from the Spanish government); the World Festival of Drama Schools workshop and performances of the delegation from Romania, and Chopin.

Council tour of "All in the Timing" was presented by the internationally acclaimed comedy theater group Stephyline (pronounced "People like us").

And there were piano concerts by the likes of English Sala Sustainable and Reynaldo Reyes (in which world tour of the 30th Barnacle Piano Concerto Journey); Antonny Emmanuel Cruz and Rudolf Gacost Pelaez Soleo (the Ashkari-trained prizewinner of the International Chopin competition in Kuala Lumpur in 2004).

Of course, there are the family-oriented favorites like "The Hills and I," "The Sound of Music," and, recently, "Cinderella"...all directed by the world-class Bonjo Jiao.

## Showcase

Cutting the ribbon during the inauguration of Rodelsa Hall were Mayor Oscar Moreno, governor of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, and Sala Sarmiento, the acclaimed pianist from Cebu—together with Pelaez-Gales, who decided to build the theater to showcase her concentration to culture and the arts.

"With Rodelsa Hall, we want to cultivate a culture of theater going in the Cagayan de Oro community," said Mercy Ramirez, founding artistic director and general manager of Rodelsa Hall.

Rodelsa Hall is a fully air-conditioned, state-of-the-art theater with 788 plush seats. It has become the venue of choice for music concerts, theater productions and dance presentations.

In fact, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, in cooperation with Mindanao Dance and the Cagayan de Oro Cultural Artist Program, had decided to hold the Pelikula at Liceuum 2005 film festival for Mindanao at Rodelsa Hall.

Rodelsa Hall has also been handpicked by city civic corporate events, such as the National Sales Convention of Avon, Inc.

## Landmark

The main entrance of Rodelsa Hall is on Rodolfo N. Pelaez Street in the Carmen district of Cagayan de Oro City. It is a majestic architectural landmark in sprawling 6-ha. hillside, which perks up the Iligan façade of Liceo U.

The lobby is flanked by two grand staircases resplendent in its Italian marble finish. Checking it all loan impressive chandeliers designed just for the lobby.

In the cap of the stairs to the theater foyer, where four doors beckon you inside the theater. Restrooms are available at the right side of the foyer and the uppermost area inside the theater.

The seats inside the theater are divided into two sections. The orchestra, which has 224 seats, and the lower and upper logo areas, which boast 496 seats.

The theater has permanently installed lighting and sound systems, which are manned by a full-time technical crew. There are facilities for those seeking dressing rooms, which make possible the "magic" of changing scenery. A mirror curtain, when unfolded down, becomes a natural sound reverberation medium.

The backstage area has a green room, male and female dressing rooms, male and female restrooms and a prayer room. The central location of the control booth of the audience area, a centralized zone allows for state-of-the-art theater operations.

The theater management, including the form of house operations, is under the Office of Cultural and Public Affairs, Liceo de Cagayan University, Carmen, Cagayan de Oro City 9000. Tel. (088-8580901 to 05 local 260. E-mail: rodelsahall@yahoo.com

**ART patrons. Historian/Artist Napoleon Abueva (left rear) poses before his bronze sculpture of Rodolfo and Elisa Pelaez, the founders of Liceo U., together with their boys—Alain, Ernesto, university president Rolando Pelaez-Gales, and Rudolf.**

# Best shows of the last quarter . . .

By Lourdes Dy
Inquirer Entertainment

**SERENATA Singers: Sol Pastoriza, Jun Pastoriza, Alexis Estrella, David Ong, Nonie Cabreros, Roger Pastoriza, Nanie Crisostomo**

NGO applauses greeted the soloists, musical directors and conductors.

First presented decades ago by Fr. James Reuter sa St. Paul College Manila, Rodgers & Hammerstein's "The Sound of Music," with its appealing love story and glorious music, still enchants. This was revisited in the Philippines in a production in Greenhills Operetta, directed by Baby Barredo, with a cast of veterans and new talents, including telenovela Heine Heras, 16, an aspiring opera star who will be featured in "Rent Park Presents" in January.

Nonie Sandy Gilvaggi, who was a big hit in the doomed (until it) "Bagong Dugong," followed up his success with a recital at the CCP's Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino, interspersing demanding and unfamiliar arias which explored his range, further making this diatribe as one of the country's finest tenors, and building up a source of screaming female fans.

Collaborating artist Rene Periciat, pianist, put up a show of his own [but with not eclipsing the singer].

Another group which reaped regular quality concerts at the Francisco Santiago Studio the Dan Ian Chambers Ensemble (headed by David C. Johnson), which in November presented great baroque music by Handel, Scarlatti ]. Keep an eye on young trumpeter Raymond de Leon, who plays with supreme confidence; he will go places.

At the Rotunda in Greenhills, seven members of the Philippine Opera Company (Nelsa Cabahug, John Glen Guevara, Rico Esquivel, Nonoy Espino, Ruth Gutierrez, the newcomer Lino Rivera Jr. and Jennifer Ty) in their collective hair-drawn ("Opera Lite"), and indulged in campy, Arbuckian humor (with Pop Quizzes as dessert), delivered spirit in English and Tagalog, and spooled scintil of songs.

The frisky Requiem and Tagine are adept at comedy and presented much of the laughs.

By mid-December, the POC had concentrated some of its poise and (at the CCP's Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino) came out with an adaptation in English of Mozart's "The Magic Flute" for children [actually it was first performed at the Bukidnon Village, Pamplona], with spoken dialogue and music, and directed by Sidney Jimenez.

The kids still like this production, with its cut and animal designs by Gino Gonzales, plus the antics of the dragon (Jay Fernandez) and Papagino (Bodjie Pascua). The complementing libretto (with L.P. translations by Bibi Reynoso) enhanced the show.

At the CCP's Tanghalang Huseng Batute, the laugh-out-comedy and affecting drama "Rabuerto (Ghost Operetta)," directed by the playwright himself, Chong Wishing of Japan, depicted the travails and conflicts smoldering within theater life.

Ensemble acting was terrific, with known performances all around, especially by Bimbo Kanapi. But the kind of panels in schoolboy uniform—Nico Manalo, Jose Cabico and Lee Pimentel elected the broadest appearance because of their comic and musical ability.

Bulacan-born Gemmel Gonzaga is the third finest tenor in the world today, after Swarovski and Domingo (Carreras can be the fourth). This was demonstrated once in Gonzaga's Dewberry concert at Philamlife Theater, which also featured virtuosos ranging from soprano Rachelle Gendrao and Camille Lopez, and pop star Dulce, whose voice remains. Another special guest was flutist Christopher Ondeza, with Rudel Columbar conducting the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra.

There were more musical events than straight plays and dance presentations during the fourth quarter, if not the year. And this only underscores the Pinoy's natural predilection for music, especially vocal music, although a few may also be highly skilled in acting and dancing.

**THE KIDS of Repertory Philippines' "The Sound of Music," directed by Baby Barredo**

**JUNO Hontiveros**

**CATHY Alcaraz**

## *REP celebrates 40th year*

REPERTORY PHILIPPINES FOUNDation, Inc. celebrates its 40th year of continuous production with the opening of its 30th season of plays Jan. 12, at Greenhills Theater in Greenhills 1 in Mandaluyong.

Founded in 1967 by the late Dominka Armador, Baby Barredo, Leo Martinez and the late Tony Mabesa and his wife Monina, REP is the oldest professional community theater company producing Western plays in English.

REP celebrates the first half of the year with a season of three seasoned comedies and a modern musical. "House Manders," a mystery farce by Frank Hick, has been dubbed by its director Mikhail Willumsen as an uncategorizable—comedy that was written ahead of its time. It features popular theater actors Ana Roces, Miguel Faustmann, Cathy Alcaraz, Jay Glorioso, Jane Hermoso, Jamie Wilson and a host of others. It opens Jan. 12.

"Song and Dance" by Andrew Lloyd Webber is a two-part theatrical concert. In the first part, "Tell Me On A Sunday," a young woman sings about living in New York City. Part two, "Variations" is a classic concert where a young man and his friends tell their story through virtuoso jazz dancing. It opens Feb. 9, 2007.

Opening Mar. 15, 2007 is "Guy Bieda," an adaptation [in English] of Jean Poiret's "La Cage Aux Folles." The straight son of a gay couple brings his fiancée and her conservative parents to meet his parents who also happen to own a nightclub called "La Cage Aux Folles."

"Glorious," written by Peter Quilter, is based on the true-life story of Florence Foster Jenkins, an opera singer who was called "the master of the bad-ing scale" because of her inability to hit correct notes but whose concerts became around, sold out, New York happenings. This uproarious event opens April 13, 2007.

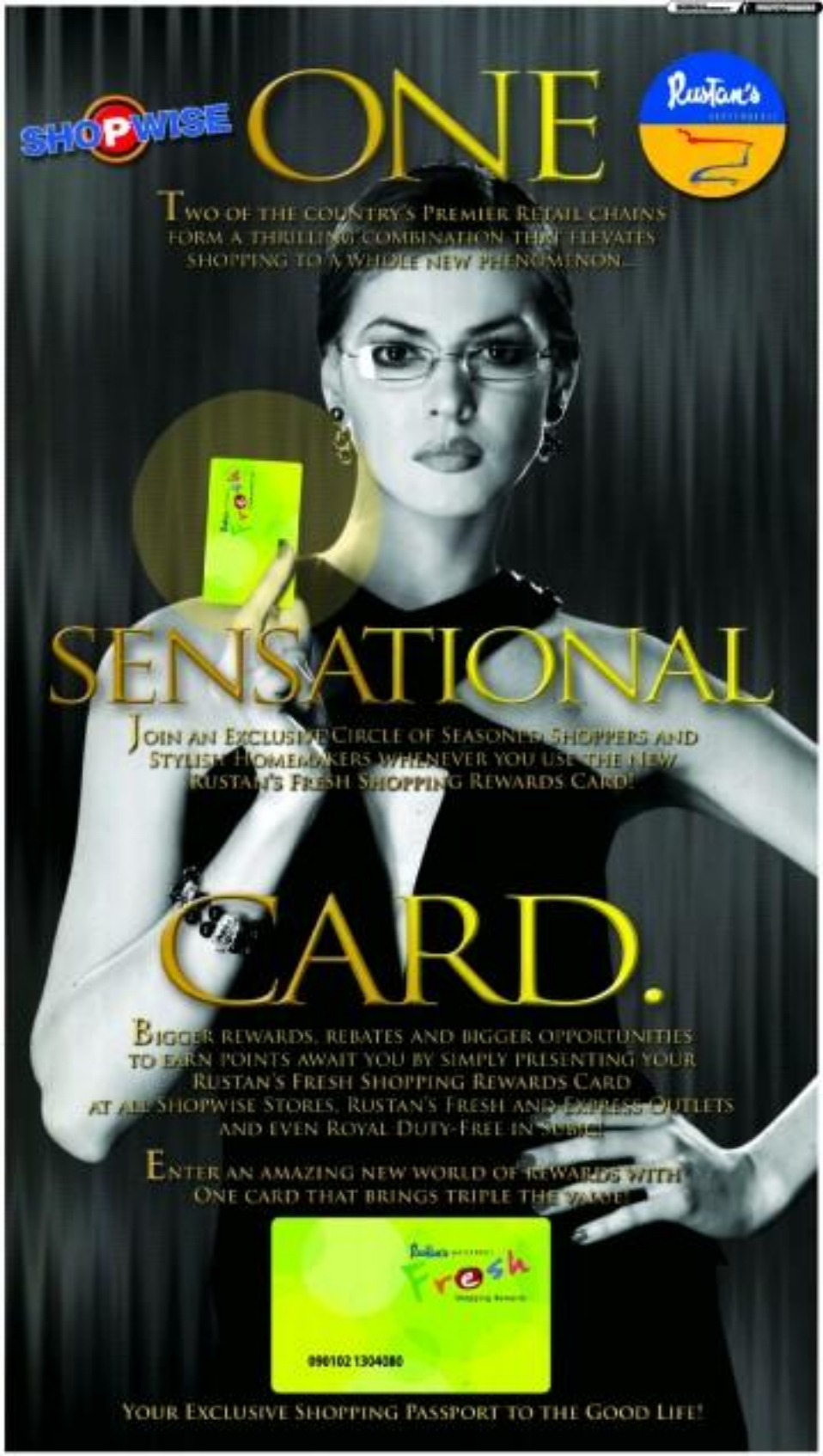
Season tickets at P1,000/each/P1,200 for all four plays are on sale at the REP office at CD-8 Bldg. C Kamias Plaza 2314 Penang Roxas Extension, Makati. They may also be mailed to interested persons by calling 8870770 or Ticketworld at 891-9999.

Visit www.repertory.philippines.com or request for a brochure at the above numbers.

Special out-of-season productions for this anniversary year are Disney's "Cinderella" (Kids) opening in August; Shakespeare's "Love's Labour's Lost" opening in September and "Fiddler on the Roof" as REP's 40th anniversary big musical celebration opening in November. All productions are to be held at Onstage in Greenhills 1 in Makati. All plays are in English and are available for purchase and advertising space, mailings and group sales.

**JAMIE Wilson**

**ANA Roces**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1 MOMENT 1 NESCAFÉ

BARANGAY Aquino cares relatives Maymay, Kiel A. Cleo, Cory Aquino, Kris Aquino, Bailey A. Cruz and Pinky A. Abellada

BARANGAY Magsaysay cares in ballroom except for Dr. Mary Magsaysay, who was in the US at the time. Dondi Albujda and wife Raz with daughter Krista; Leizl Jimenez Magsaysay with Micha and Bernie (front); Dr. Carlos Magsaysay with Monica, Gina and hubby, Dr. Mike Magsaysay

# Memorable night with Asian pantheon of heroes

**Text and photos**
**by Mandy Maranan**

TIME MAGAZINE SAID IT ALL when it gave homage to the 60 unremarkable men and women who made up Asia's "astonishing array of heroes."

Time acknowledged it was privileged to have met "the most exceptional of them—on the campaign trail, in the boardroom and the watercloset, on the factory floor and the film set." In featuring those remarkable individuals, Time said, "we have told the story of Asia's transformation from poverty to powerhouse, from colonies to nations, from being colonized to leading the global economy in a new era."

In a sterling photographic salute with the Mr. and Mrs. Special Edition in the 1980s, Time had the privilege of having met Cory Aquino "in the campaign trail" and later, in Malacañang (late 1986-1992). The icon of Filipino People Power, Tita Cory led the "army of heroes" that Time Asia honored in a gala dinner at the Grand Ballroom of the Hyatt Century Park Hotel in Century.

As a swelled Cory fan, I could not help but gush at the sight of Tita Cory resplendent in a bright red gown and surrounded by her four lovely philanthropic daughters Ballsy, Viel, Pinky and Kris. The greatest Aquino women have been the subject of my camera through the years.

Of course, there were media icons Eugenia "Tita Eggie" Apostol and Lotsy Jimenez Magsaysay, beloved founding chair and former editor in chief, respectively, who were also among the 60 Asian heroes feted that night.

EUGENIA Duroc-Apostol, Elvie "Baby" Rosca, Cory Aquino and Lotsy Jimenez Magsaysay, four Asian heroes from the Philippines

In 1985, Tita Eggie outfoxed the Marcos-controlled media when she published the life and life-sized edition, a black-and-white pullout from her regular glossy women's magazine, Mr. & Ms., and had the pages of the magazine splashed with photos of Ninoy Aquino's funeral and the succeeding street protests against the Marcos regime. The editor in chief was her friend and kindred spirit, Lotsy Magsaysay.

Apostol's tabloid dared where other media feared to tread—that is, cover the issues that Marcos did not want reported. The heavy lifting was left to Lotsy Magsaysay, never not even "militant" or "political activist."

In accepting the honor bestowed by Time Asia, Magsaysay simply expressed her thanks to Time Asia and her family, which included siblings scattered in the United States. "I wanted to show the Philippine diaspora," she would later tell me.

Apostol, for her part, feigned the fact nothing more to say, after Magsaysay had used up most allotted time of two minutes. That elicited some chuckles from the audience.

Hillarie's superstar Elvie "Bata" Rosca Jr. was even more plentiful with his folksy notes. When he asked "Why me?" after accepting the honor bestowed by Time Asia, not a few sighed over the icon's childlike simplicity. As one of the Time executives told me, Rosca was a unanimous choice of the jurors. Not only because they loved hillbands, but that Bayan also embodied the "wide-defying ability of a poor Pinoy to parlay hard work, skill and guile into fame, fortune and respect."

All in all, it was a memorable night with Asia's living heroes.

# Tribute to National Artist for Dance Ramon Obusan

NATIONAL Artist for Film Eddie Romero pays tribute to Obusan.

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION for Culture and the Arts and the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) paid tribute to National Artist for Dance Ramon Obusan in an ecological rites on Dec. 28 at the CCP Main Theater. Obusan, 88, succumbed to cardio-pulmonary arrest on Dec. 21.

Obusan was the founder of the Ramon Obusan Folkloric Group, which earned fame and distinction for its fidelity and authenticity in presenting Filipino traditional dances. The country's national artists, dancers, cultural workers, diplomatic corps and relatives attended the rites Obusan.

The remains of Obusan were laid to rest at the Manila Memorial Park.

OBUSAN'S kin carry his ashes to the CCP.

OBUSAN'S urn

# UST hosts international conference on history of medicine

THE MIGUEL DE BENAVIDES (CENTRAL Library) of the University of Santo Tomas is holding the First International Conference on the History of Medicine in the Philippines on Jan. 5 and 12 at the Antonio Hevenor del Rosario Heritage Section of the library, UST campus, España, Manila.

Organized with the UST Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, the conference is convened by Fr. Angel Aparicio, O.P., UST professor Emeritus, and Dr. Raquel Reyes of the British Academy of Rembrandt Professors and the Department of Southeast Asia and the Islands of the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London.

The conference seeks to tap the library and archives of UST, which houses one of the richest collections of books and manuscripts on the history of medicine in the country.

Despite the availability of resources, the history of medicine in the Philippines is a neglected field of study. The conference, the convenors said, aims to bring together the country's first time a diverse range of health science professionals, scholars, activists and librarians to explore the history of medicine in the Philippines from the 16th-20th century.

Speakers include Prof. Peter Boomgaard of the Royal Netherlands Institute for the Study of Southeast Asia and the Caribbean ("Writing Medical Histories in Southeast Asia: Comparative Approaches to Disease, Health and Healing"); Dr. Raquel A.G. Reyes ("Philippine Medical History: A Survey of the Field"); Fr. Angel Aparicio, O.P. ("Bibliography of Medical Books Existing at the UST Miguel de Benavides Library [Before 1945]"); Prof. Juan G. Blesquida of the University of Asia and the Pacific ("The Hinterland Manila Founder and Patron of the Hospital of San Juan de Dios"); Fr. Luis Gutierrez, O.P., historian ("San Gabriel, Hospital de Chinos, Founded by the Dominicans"); Fr. Fidel Villaroel, O.P., UST archivist ("Origin of the UST Faculty of Medicine and Surgery and the Faculty of Pharmacy");

Dr. Norberto V. Martinez of the Department of Otorhinolaryngology of UST Medicine ("The Licentiate Curricula of the Four Period of the UST Faculty of Medicine"); Dr. Armando T. Ordinario of UST Medicine ("The Doctoral Curriculum of the UST Faculty of Medicine and Surgery Before the Japanese Occupation"); Dr. Mary Jean Villa-Real Cortes of the Department of General Pediatrics, Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition of the UST Hospital ("The First Faculty Members of the University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Medicine and Surgery"); Dr. Gil Gonzalez of UST Medicine ("The First Graduates of the UST Faculty of Medicine: Their Impact on Medicine in the Philippines"); and

Prof. Linda Newson of King's College, London ("Spanish Medical Practice in the Early Colonial Philippines: Contents and Prospects"); Dr. Raquel Reyes ("Nilumon in the Tagal Time: Juan de Nava's Vida Social de la Mujer Filipina"); and Dr. Angeles Tan-Acuin of UST Medicine ("Some Notes on Cholera and Leprosy in the Philippines").

The keynote will be delivered by Health Secretary Francisco Duque III. UST Rector Magnificus Fr. Ernesto Arceo, O.P., will give a special message.

Conference fee is P1,000. Call the UST Miguel de Benavides Library (731-0034; 406-1611 local 8224), or UST Faculty of Medicine and Surgery (740-5334; 406-1611 local 8259).

## *New book on public speaking*

CARMENCITA P. DEL VILLAR'S "Mind-Body Communication Technique" is off the press.

Published by the University of the Philippines Press, the book is subtitled "An Alternative Way of Learning and Teaching Confidence in Public Speaking" and is a useful reference book for students helping students conquer their communication fears and build their confidence.

The book presents steps that the teacher can use to help students in any oral communication or performance classes. The steps are the result of years of successful experimentations by the author with non-traditional teaching techniques.

The book is also useful for classes on acting for stage and television, broadcasting, music, dance, sports and marketing.

The author is a member of the Department of Speech Communication and Theater Arts of the College of Arts and Letters of UP Diliman.

ARTWORK by Buen Calubayan

# Poets and visual artists collaborate in exhibit at Beato Angelico

THE GAP BETWEEN THE LITERARY AND THE VISUAL arts is a gaping wound, and as such needs to be healed. As a step toward complete recuperation and Wagner's dream of the Gesamtkunstwerk or total art, young visual and literary artists on the uprise from the University of Santo Tomas come together in the landmark collaborative show, "Langib," as an attempt to form an artistic scab to patch up the damage.

Some of the artists paired to collaborate on twelve visual works are Mark Magbanua and Serbo Guevara, Buen Calubayan and Angelo Suarez, Mark Salvatus and Elmer Rimando, Jay Sicuya and Nicanor Garduque, Lawrence Sicuya and Rosencio Tuazon, Constantino Jiacinto and Candice Valencia, Jess Reina and Karen Capoy, and Rainier Cruz and Chelo Gotiw.

"Langib: a literary + visual arts exhibit" opens with readings and performances on Jan. 5, 6 p.m., at the Beato Angelico Gallery (College of Fine Arts and Design building) of UST, and will run until Jan. 20. Call Jay Parcon (0915-7806350) or Angelo Suarez (0918-2809418).

# Music lovers' choice for 2006

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

FROM SUPERSONIC AUDIBLE feedback, monsoon reactions, and the twelve reception, it looks like the Pianist of the Year is 12-year-old Yunnan Ilya Scriabinsky prizewinner of the Xian Xing Hong International Piano Competition and the Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibaud Competition in Paris.

Music connoisseurs are one in saying that his rendering of Mozart's Sonata in C Minor, KV 475, was astounding; his interpretation of Schubert's "Wanderer" Fantasy in C Major was beyond words. And all the way to the Variations, Chopin, Liszt and Tchaikovsky fantasy pieces, Scriabinsky revealed not just ravishing technique but also a lot of heart. Piano fans nearly caused a riot backstage at Philamlife, competing for the pianist's autograph.

The first time I heard it live, I thought the Andrea Chenier duet of tenor Chantel Contreras and soprano Camille Lopez Molina with the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra under Redel Calderon had eclipsed everything I heard in other venues during the year.

"Oh Holy Night!" as performed by Contreras is the Christmas Carol of the Year.

The lingering classical music we just in schools, shopping malls in Manila and the provinces, the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra under Lucresia Kasilag-Jala harmonious and desirable choice.

PIANIST Ilya Scriabinsky

BASKETBALL signing autographs

LIBRARIAN Zagaroza Ramos

JOSE Mari Chan

### Coc-et Equitable

Not to be missed during the week in the state recital of cellist Victor Michael Cuo at Equitable PCI Bank's Premier Heritage Hall on Thursday, Jan. 4, 6 p.m. This is the same cellist who got a standing ovation at the Philamlife the other year after a performance of the Dvorak cello concerto with the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra under Lukaszuk. For tickets, call 9887020 or 8906.5 DAZE.

On Friday, Jan. 5, UN-based UN-ipino pianist Gabriel(ito) Zagaroza Ramos will team up with José Mari Chan at the Meralco Theater in a special Fundraising concert of the Rotarians (Sons of the Sagittarius Rotary, which spearheads the Tuesday Need Program for street families living in pushcarts. For tickets, call 3720207 or 0919-2654586.

### Silver Aida

The music-related play not to be missed is Julius Mitchell's "Silver Aida" to be staged at the Teatrino on Saturday, Jan. 13. Directed by James del Mundo, "Silver Aida" features Mel Dalisay as Umanjan Ayala, Bart Guingona as Amigo Boto, Faribang Ramos as Saniel's wife Gimpalina Steppenpant, Jiel Mundo as Julio Saniel and Bobbie Guevarra as Franco Pando.

Interpreting Saniel as an expressive Rachelle Arevalos and Dennis Espino, tenors Renato Ferrer and Sandy Gilongo, baritone Abiel Ecarma with pianist Mary Anne Espina. For tickets, call 9887020 or 8906.5 DAZE.

# Diaz opens eighth solo exhibit

ARTIST JS Diaz, Raya Magsaysay, Robert Yupangco, Price Cisco, Alan Alcantara, owner of Her Exige Art Center, and Lisa Tiu Lee

NEW! Diaz, R. Kanagaratnam, the artist, Cecile Diaz, and Gemma Cruz Araneta

WINNERS Candelaria, Michael and Cristina Hinds, Celeste Candelaria

GUESTS Rep. Emily Lopez, Social Welfare Sec. Esperanza Cabral, Diaz, Rep. Cynthia Villar, Nini Teves, (back row) Cecile and Nono Diaz, presidential assistant for Central Luzon; former tourism secretary Gemma Cruz Araneta; urban planner Jun Palafox; Rep. Mikee Magsaysay and Rep. Pablo Panchia

FORMER tourism secretary Matilde Lim, Nini Lopez, Cabral, Carol Cunningham, (standing) Ludwig Nieto, Palafox, Villar, Cecile Diaz, Corsino and Kevin Murphy

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# Opera of the year

From page D6

ow direction was almost the only guarantee that they opted for a no-subtitles production. His approach was geared toward maximum effect from subtle gradations.

This heightened such scene even more than its original capacity to communicate certain meanings or emotions if Noel gestures were employed. It was an intelligent decision to actually temper this aspect of an otherwise evident exuberance of the popular Russian hyperbole.

The rare other creative forces behind this production, who each left no less than a mark of wisdom, were Gino Gonzales and Monina Duque.

Gonzales' set design was minimal but not unduly minimalist. His visual representations efficiently held together the essential elements of place—geographically and atmospherically—and spatial distribution. He went beyond tradition though kept its territory, he's a step behind postmodernism but allusive to it with enough restraint.

Duque's lighting for "Eugene Onegin" was pure poetry. The basis for all superlatives basically lay on the texture it added to the highly charged parts of the opera, particularly in the letter and duel scenes. Light is the most metaphor to any visual solution. With his work, the emo-tensed came out beautifully and with an intensity which could have been less otherwise, if not for the mark he illuminated.

"Eugene Onegin," in the beginning, might have appeared too overwhelming for quite a number of first timers, but the DZT production was admirable. Ultimately, with all the hype on high art and its conceptual babble, what matters is that it connects.

We realize in the end that this opera happened in real time, that it could have been the story of no one in particular and everyone in general, that we do understand these things more than we ever hoped to imagine. And in the pure Stravinskian's words, everything's just as it might: "In my state who dare throw dice with him? My fate now and him and fight, / It goes with him."

'EUGENE ONÉGIN'

# Opera of the year

By Allan Pastrana
Contributor

THE PHILIPPINE PREMIERE OF Tchaikovsky's opera "Eugene Onégin" was successfully staged by the University of Sto. Tomas Conservatory of Music in October at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. The event was the first of a series to mark the UST Quadricentennial in 2011 (UST was founded in 1611).

It was, indeed, a talented cast de luxe as the all-Thomasian cast was joined by the UST Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Prof. Dr. Josephine Reyes and Cleo Palanca, as conducted by Prof. Ricardo Abad Jr.

With four performances in three days, the production was one of the biggest risks of the conservatory to date.

There were initial misgivings as to the possible reception of the local audience to a Russian opera. It has always been easier to sell the idea of, to realize opera, both musically and conceptually, than the reception of the "serious" type, the musical form is supposed to correspond to ordinary concerns and rely heavily on the motivations of realism to solicit a favorable response.

The real time performance of the last day was well attended—a good vantage point, if one may say so, to savor the merits of an opera production. There is always a laid back quality to true vacation shows (though it doesn't necessarily follow that the gala is better). But what would have been a lukewarm afternoon of Russian opera came across as an exciting evaluation of talents, initiative and athletics.

A whole new breed of singers tackling a Russian masterpiece is an open-ended realization—probably not as hectic as the "make or break" principle of the actors, but more immediate, like "received or dissolved" for a trusting audience. The cast that afternoon was brilliant, by any standard worthy of admiration.

Noel Asorin's Onégin was a commanding figure. Both his physical presence and vocal projection were easy references for anyone to think the role was cut to fit him. One thing that's amazing about him is that he could shift from a full ringing quality to a breezy if transparent lyricism without much effort. Such range of vocal color available to him made the character's journey from indifference to acknowledgement, from worldliness to deep awakening even more compelling.

THE DUEL scene in Tchaikovsky's "Eugene Onegin"

The UST Conservatory of Music's production of Tchaikovsky's opera was a tour de force

## Gilongo and Perez

Then there are major operatic characters whose emotional or psychological unfolding is more or less evident (take the villains, or what is recognized to be that one makes all the difference). Take the short girl Liz in Puccini's "Turandot," for example. Take her one chance to survey audience off their feet with "Signore, ascolta," the poet Lenski is given that moment (in a fraction of it) to reflect on his mortality with "Kuda, kuda, kuda vse ushlo."

Randy Gilongo turned the stage during the earlier years of his character's musings and beyond, even after he fell to the ground, after the terrible gloom of the second act's final scene gave way to the looming indifference and coldness of Russian seniority in the final act's opening scene. Gilongo's voice has always contained recognizable nuances that clearly lends itself to dramatic resonance.

The most gratifying revelation though that afternoon was Thea Perez as Tatyana. One must remember that Perez is a more experienced considerations when judging a singer's success on handling a role vocally. It goes beyond range and quality (the way Verdi rejected the idea of putting just another beautiful voice to sing) and Macbeth.

Perez's Tatyana was a luminous version. Her voice matched her subtle but undoubtedly effective acting. She worked her way through Tatyana's transformations with a transitioned ease, giving the audience an accurate portrait of one of opera's most beloved heroines.

The rest of the cast was a gathering of excellent performers—Benedikt Evangelista as Olga; Rowen Espino as Filippyevna; Marian Faeldonia as Larina; Leonard de la Cruz as Triquet; Jun Jamolla as Gremin; Emmanuel Ibanag as Zaretsky and Jun Medina as the Captain.

## Functional adjustments

For one, it was obvious in the many how everybody involved made it possible for a non-Russian speaking land, consequently, feeling audiences in true Paris. The adjustments were functional but never clinical. The Quin-

SPENA/ST

TRIMORE Dionisi Gonzaga and Randy Gilongo

SOPRANO Thea Perez

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# ENTERTAINMENT

MAXIMUM EXPOSURE: From left, Ambassadors, Eggstatics and Imago

YEAREND REPORT

## Pinoy rock goes all the way pop

By Pachalo Concepcion
Contributor

IN 2006, PINOY ROCK WENT ALL THE WAY pop.

Not only did many bands achieve mainstream popularity with wildly successful albums that were 7-year-olds could relate to, these bands were also given maximum exposure on broadcast media and embraced by the advertising industry.

For instance, it's now possible for a rock group like Kamikazee, known for rowdy live performances and a vocalist whose body is tattooed all over like a pinball, to be classified family on Eheem Cuneta's TV show. Plus, what was otherwise deemed incongruous sometime ago is now considered synergy at work: Kamikazee front man Jay Contreras, sweat dripping from his scary naked torso, singing the latest commercial jingle of an ice cream conglomerate.

KAMIKAZEE

It's perfectly all right these days for nearly any group, the Independents, to be a favorite TV guest—no matter if the entire content of its debut album, "Inconvictus," is a satire of television routinely shows "Eat Bulaga," "Showtime," "SOP" and "MAP."

It looks cautionary as well for a band company to sponsor a rock singing talent search and have it aired on MTV (featuring such serious yet unsung rock underground figures as Chinkee Pura and Jon Lapiz, as lead juror and musical director, respectively).

### Interconnected

But a new prime time TV drama series, or even a late-night newscast, to have the strongest audience impact, the seem these days is to have its theme/soundtrack written and recorded by rock bands as well.

And, by the way, it doesn't look embarrassing at all to hear a hyper-literate act like Slapshock turn an otherwise scriptural expression that means "Praise the Lord," into a street battle cry for nationalistic "Hallelujah!"

How and why did these things happen like they were all interconnected?

It's only logical to trace everything back to the phenomenon that was the Eraserheads. Remember that some five years after the rise of the Series, it was the E-heads that kicked the doors wide open for struggling musicians to snag a record deal and not follow the usual "image" propped formula record executives

PAGE 22

SLAMJAM! Harajuan of Sandwich.

# 26 quotable quotes from 2006

THE YEAR 2007 HAS A NICE RING TO IT for both Sagandilas (MS-DIN-I) and Kapuso (GMA-7) stars. This must be an indication that it will be a terrific year for both networks. It takes two to get to seventh heaven!

On Day One of Our Beta Year, join me as I give a rundown of the 26 quotable quotes I gathered in 2006. Thank you, my loyal readers, for making "Dollywood" No. 1 on myJ.net's online survey all throughout '06. See all here a space in this column as well as in my head.

**DOLLY WOOD**
*Dolly Anne Carvajal*

•ALEA BUHLACH: "The moment I got married, all the rules changed. I can't tell my spouse na 'Sorry ganito talaga/ganyan ka nung single pa ka.' When our kids grow up and have their own lives, knitting blankets lang si Charlene ang mapaguusapan at hindi ako de-jeet magmodel sa kitpicture."

•GRETCHEN BARRETTO: "I'm lucky I'm not back in shape but for the money [but] for my sense of fulfillment. Now I can never become if I can out of semifinal out of mind."

•ANGEL LOCSIN: "One diet and I am sexy. Isa lang ang problema ko—ayaw kong magpakasal. People keep asking us about our wedding plans. Mina-mind naming pumunta ng Boracay, kaso tatlo-tatlo."

•HESTHER ESAMPIO: "There are many new faces but that doesn't make me insecure. What counts is staying power, not instant fame!"

•IAM RILEY: "Honestly, I don't realize how famous they say I am. Literally watch my shows and see my TV ads because I'm rarely home. I also don't see my billboards a lot because I'm usually asleep in the car. For me, it's all work. Para just happens to be a bonus."

•PIOLO PASCUAL: "I never think that I'm better or more popular than my co-stars. We are all equal but not the same. May sari-sarili ring style bawat artista."

•MARVIN AGUSTIN: "A pardon me 'cos' some women are fragile but they can hurt men more than they realize it."

•JOEY MARQUEZ: "There are times I feel I love someone more than I loved the one who came before her. But with my children, I make sure they all feel loved equally."

•GERALD ANDERSON: "To make sure all female ang sila ko, I tell my family na ambahan nila ako if they notice any changes in my spirit that I may not be aware of."

•ALEA HIGUERRA: "For all the heartaches I caused my mom, I'm willing to give her one spa."

•TOM GONZAGA: "I don't go out on dates. The guys linked to me are those I work with. If I'm in a relationship, I still take care of my family. I just want to try to be independent but kind-ala liberated.

•ZIA ZIA PADILLA: "Have your fun while you're young. When you grow older, you can resort to plastic surgery to make up for your mistakes."

•MARK FERNANDEZ: "Four-four thirties has a new baby with Katrina, I guess it's our loyal fans who are more affected than I am. Marvin and I will always be a tandem on stage but off-stage our lives have to stop intersecting the illusion that we'll still get back together."

•GERWIN BELLO: "I don't believe in sexual-asexual. It's too stiff. I'd rather be friend a girl and take things from there. No expectations... no nobody gets hurt."

•JOLIBEE BRODANIEL: "Mapoi ako ng pop-dog!"

•AI-AI DE LAS ALAS: "Napagalitan ang mataray! pareho ako magkakaroon ng pupu na bagets. Ang hapot mo nga eamon, papunta pa lang ang mga bagets, ah, pahahi na ito. Ihanap na lang nila magkaroon kaming lasot!"

•REGINE VELASQUEZ: "I can't be singing forever but I'll grow old with music pa rin in my heart. That's why I put up [our] Music as I can help new singers reach those high notes and their dreams."

•CHRISTOPHER ALCARAZ: "My wife and I have an understanding that's beyond understanding by other people. It's incomprehensible to them how our long-distance marriage works."

•MERIAM QUIMBERAS: "To recover from my split up with my husband does not mean I have to find a replacement... for him right away. Focusing on other things that I have to do, like that art work, soothes me. It's a different kind of love. The romantic kind one-sort."

•JOHN LUTRAAN: "I'm not a 24/7 dad so when I get a chance to be with my kids, I treat them like any husband. Imo there are times I have to remind them that I'm the dad-do-ya-do."

•CESAR MONTANO: "When Jonalene and I are sweet, sobrang sweet. When we fight, feel na feel din namin! It's that intensity that keeps us together."

•ALFRED VARGAS: "I think it's healthy to feel jealous as long as it's just the right amount to keep things exciting between me and my GF."

•POLO RAVALES: "Even if you are not just sure always, depot pa feel mo as GF mo na noong sila."

•JESSICA SORIANO: "Sometimes what feels good is not right for you. It's a tug-of-war between mind and heart. We all have to go through that to know what love really is."

E-mail wearingdollsdiary@yahoo.com.

YEAREND REPORT

# Pinoy rock goes all the way pop

## It's only logical to trace everything back to the phenomenon that was the Eraserheads, who kicked the doors open for struggling musicians

From page E1

soul to impose on artists to "please the masses."

Not only did the E-heads, followed closely by Parokya Ni Edgar, Rivermaya and, later, Bamboo, insist on appearing as themselves onstage and on TV, they also wrote songs about real life experiences that spoke to their generation. The result was a huge fan base that followed every single of their bands' careers. Many of the fans were so inspired that they themselves nurtured dreams of forming their own bands.

And they did.

ORANGE and Lemons

### Street-wise

Listen closely to Sugardrive and realize how like Daniel seems to have absorbed Ely Buendia's storytelling skills. The Bobaserma, too, appear to have learned a lot from the Teeth-anchored music of Parokya. Put more severe wear reign to the bounce and Barrilleaux easily comes to mind. The list is quite long to mention here, but most probably you'll see them every week on TV.

What were some of the songs that had everyone from day one to last drivers singing along?

One was Orange and Lemons' "Pinoy ako," which of course benefitted a lot from its being the soundtrack of a reality TV show. The song had a very infectious hook that pretty soon, the band was being accused of playing its melody from a few eggs ago. The band's CD, "Sticks Whittle the Tree to Bing," would actually reveal more of its influences. Besides, the familiar and other World acts in songs that the average Love Radio Usteners may not instantly identify with. But when it comes to writing TV themes and soundtracks, Orange and Lemons surely know how to cash-in everyone's taste.

Another song that was on everybody's lips was Bamboo's "Noypi." The brilliance of its powerful tongue and brute screeching lyrics almost hid the fact that the song was indeed written with Angel Locsin in mind—specifically her character in a recent fantasy telenovela. The band's 22), "Mahirap," contains more references to pop culture symbols, even as there are other tracks that emphasize Kamikazee's heavy metal leanings—but which are made palatable with fun-filled lyrics.

### Synergy

What could be more fun-filled than the songs in "Karaoke@Ortanza," the tribute CD in which Universal Records hit the gold mine by gathering the hottest young bands to interpret the music of one of the most durable symbols of Pinoy pop, the Apo Hiking Society.

Again, here was synergy at work: Not only did the rock bands help rekindle interest in what Danny Javier, Jim Paredes and Boboy Garrovillo had made popular ages ago, but the versions these bands recorded, in "Babaeng-tuwalya," "Batang Bata" and "Umiboodoodoo," to name a few, actually pushed their careers up. The result: Sponge Cola got on the SM Soundtrack Circuits showed the solid enthusiasm young people had for artists whose music might be rock-based, but whose lyrics clearly bore pop sentiments.

How the bands would explore this structure with more positive results is yet to be seen. Meanwhile, it's best to keep checking out what they have in offer. It bodes an ethnic college student expression from the 90s that Bamboo has sometimes made more emotional" Junkie!"

BAMBOO

# Why some stars become directors

STARS LIVE A CLOSETED LIFE. THEY'RE IN movie, make loads of money are given special treatment, and get to play out for millions to admire. So why would any closet ins luminary choose to give up all those earthly goodies for the mostly-hapless job of film directing?

It must be the chance to be in charge of everything, to see your unfiltered cinematic vision through, to speak in your own voice, instead of following somebody else's instructions.

The motivation's great, but a director's problems and challenges are many, so many stars prefer to stay out of the director's chair. However, some do go where no one might has to tread, and a few of them even triumph over the difficult movie medium.

This has been the case since the early days of film. For instance, comic genius Charlie Chaplin both acted and directed. Decades later, the nineties counterpart, Woody Allen, both stars in and bags one film after another.

## Biggest names

These days, however, the biggest actor-director names are Clint Eastwood and Mel Gibson.

Their latest films ("Letters from Iwo Jima," "Flags of Our Fathers," "Apocalypto") are scrutinized for awards, and do well at the box office as well.

They have a much tougher time directing than acting, but the creative and psychic rewards are much greater when you're in charge of an entire film, rather than just your own performance.

So, stars who want to be complete film artists take a deep breath, further down for some really hot crowds, and start directing.

Other stars who have done well as directors include Barbra Streisand, John Huston, Mel Brooks, Danny DeVito, Bob Hope, Ron Howard, Spike Lee, Ida Lupino, Sofia Coppola, Martin Scorsese, Quentin Tarantino, Jodie Foster, Kenneth Branagh, Erich von Stroheim, Orson Welles, Miles Norman, John Cassavetes, Harry Hillaire, Gene Kelly, Buster Keaton, Arlie Lucille and Warren Beatty.

## In RP movies

On the Philippine film front, actor-directors have also been around since the very beginning. Before he became one of the finest directors, Eddy de Leon was a doctor and actor.

**VIEWFINDER**

*Nestor U. Torre*

Nora Aunor famous for playing strong suffering mother on the silver screen, and directed quite a number of movies as well. Ketsupetin Santiago, Nadia's dad, acted before he found himself behind the movie cameras.

Later, even Nora Aunor, Christopher de Leon and Vilma Santos tried their hand at directing (only to decide soon after that they preferred their usual playful fun as stars).

Three days, the Cesar Montano which making a name for himself as an actor-director, especially after the critical success that was "Panaghoy ta Suba." In this month's Metro Iloi festival, he's holding his latest directorial effort, "Lupita."

Other Filipino actor-directors include Lourdes Gaillen, Eddie Garcia, Joel Lamangan, Ishmo Cervantes, Irma Adlaw and Mikhael de Mesa.

## 'Chic Eats'

DISCOVERY Travel & Living presents the series "The Suit" at 9 p.m. every Friday, starting Jan. 5. The first episode, "Australia: Slow Food," introduces a philosophical approach to food and eating that's the antithesis of fast food. Viewers are invited to a slow food feast hosted by Janice Broadway. Asian food enthusiasts are responsible for everything on the menu, from the rhubarb to the black pigs on the farm.

## Rachel Weisz

ACADEMY award-winning actress Rachel Weisz stars in two 2007 new releases—"Fragile" and "The Fountain."

In "Fragile," Weisz provides the voice of the movie's magical dragon named Sophia.

In "The Fountain," Weisz finds herself in a story with the three timelines about a man's (Hugh Jackman) eternal struggle to save the woman he loves.

Weisz plays both Isabel, Queen of Spain, and Tommy Clee's ailing wife in the present-day story.

## Serious entertainment

DIANE willfield space required.
Dear Mr Nepales,

I used to read the business front page, select digital stories, and then the jump pages, in that order. Now I read the front page, some digital, yes, and then the jump pages. Thank you for bringing hard work and intelligent writing to the mainstream news page.

**FEEDBACK**

FROM Ben Fernandez Bonifacio@yahoo.com.ph Phoenix, AZ.

While you're probably happy celebrating your wins, you are doing a great job disservice and [illegible] shame to all Filipinos by flying them in drama, life and poverty. Not even because this people were very [illegible] but they were. That is how they will remember [about] the Filipino race. It is sad that you profit from this misery and inadequacy.

(The subject of the aforementioned was redacted.—Ed.)

BARBRA Streisand sings during the Anders Agassi Grand Slam for Children fundraiser at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. AFP/FILE

MICK Jagger (right) and Keith Richards during the Rolling Stones performance at the Super Bowl on Feb. 1 last year in Detroit. AP

# US top concert draws

LOS ANGELES—THE ROLLING STONES were the top concert draw in North America for a second consecutive year, while Barbra Streisand came in at No. 2 with her first major tour in a dozen years, trade publication Pollstar magazine said on Thursday.

The energetic British rockers sold $158.1 million worth of tickets for 39 shows across the United States and Canada. The band ranks as the third highest on Pollstar's all-time list, behind the Stones' 2005 tour ($162 million), and Irish rock band U2's trek that same year ($138.9 million).

Streisand, hitting the road for her first big tour since 1994, pulled in $92.5 million for just 28 shows, thanks to an average ticket price of $298. By contrast, Stones shows were a relative bargain with an average price of almost $107.

Husband-and-wife country stars Tim McGraw and Faith Hill were No. 3 with $89.8 million for 75 shows. They were followed by Madonna with $83.9 million (39 shows) and the Cirque du Soleil's Beatles tour with $82.1 million (166 shows).

Pollstar said ticket sales for the top 100 shows rose about 15 percent to $2.9 billion, breaking last year's record of $2.1 billion, thanks in part to an eight percent jump in the average ticket price to $61.45. Total $94.8M. Other costly acts included Madonna, with an average price of almost $134, and the Who with $130. The British veterans, No. 13 on this year's list, charged an average $77 during their last outing in 2002.

The top 100 acts sold a combined 37.9 million tickets, up four percent from 36.3 million last year, but barely changed from 2004's 37.3 million.

Gary Bongiovanni, editor of the Nashville, California-based publication, said it was a "good year overall" for the concert business. "There's definitely a substantial appetite for live music," he said in an interview.

The situation contrasts with the youth and savvy state of the recorded music business, where album sales were down about five percent from 2005, according to Nielsen SoundScan data.

As usual, there was no touch from blood among the top touring acts, many of whom have been around since the 1970s and 1980s. Other reviews included Elton John at No. 10, Billy Joel at No. 11, the Def Leppard-led country double-headline at No. 14, Aerosmith and Motley Crue at No. 18, and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young at No. 20.

Only country has succeeded in bringing a whole new generation of acts, including Kenny Chesney (No. 7), Rascal Flatts (No. 12) and Toby Keith (No. 16).

The throng have not confirmed plans for 2007, but they are expected to reunite in Europe to make good on summer dates that were scrapped after guitarist Keith Richards and singer Mick Jagger were fined. Streisand has also talked about taking her show overseas.

But other "oldies" acts will still be vied in North America, among them Rod Stewart and British progressive-rock band Genesis, reuniting with Phil Collins. Reuters

# Why FrancisM mourns James Brown's passing

By Pachalo Consejarco
Contributor

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS REPORTED FROM New York on Friday:

"Even in death, James Brown can move a crowd.

"Thousands of people danced and sang in the streets outside the Apollo Theater in a raucous celebration Thursday of the music legend's life as his body was displayed on the stage where he made his 1956 debut.

"Music thumped from storefronts and portable stereos. Brown's wide and grandly overblown hands (the auditorium's has been marked quite by single-file pure his open gold sofa).

"Brown lay resplendent in a blue suit, white gloves and silver shoes. An arrangement of red flowers on a white background spelled out his nickname: Godfather.

"It was maybe the first time the hardest working man in show business graced a stage in silence, but that did not stop his fans from partying.

"Women, who died of heart failure Christmas morning at 73, lay in repose in the theater that helped catapult him to fame and was the setting for a thrilling live album in 1962.

"Earlier, Brown's body was carried in the theater through the streets of Harlem on a majestic white carriage drawn by two white horses.

"Hundreds of fans followed behind the cortege singing the chorus of Brown's anthem, 'Say It Loud—I'm Black and I'm Proud.'"

FLOWERS adorn Brown's statue in his hometown of Augusta, Georgia.

FANS wait outside Apollo Theater hoping to get a last glimpse of their idol.

I first came across the name of James Brown in 1981. I was a high school senior browsing through the pages of a music almanac at the library. I couldn't get understand why Brown was referred to as 'The Hardest Working Man in Show Business, The Original Disco Man, or The Godfather of Soul.'

All I knew was that he was black.

Ten years later, Francis Magdalena would explain to me the significance of Brown's music to several generations of fans that span the connection between gospel, R&B, soul, funk, disco and hip hop.

In his humor-tinged lecture to his generation, Francis would play James Brown albums, especially a 4-CD box set that traced the singer-songwriter-bandleader-record-producer's career that began in the 1950s.

Francis even bought a book that chronicled Brown's roots, from the genre list that helped his folks in the sixties fields while working on the side as a shoeshiner boy in his/her as an accessories pop music figure and legendary symbol of Afro-American pride.

## Signposts

Listening to the CDs, I'd get a kick as Brown reminisced. Brown in an emotional ballad called "Please, Please, Please." As the songs played, Francis also took pains pointing out the tracks that not only highlighted Brown's career, but served as signposts of sorts(!) important genres in contemporary Western music: "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag" and "I Got You (I Feel Good)," both of which were Top 10 and No. 1 hits in the pop and R&B charts and have since become standard repertoire of hip Pinoy "alternative" bands; "Cold Sweat," which entire called the first "true" funk recording; "Say It Loud—I'm Black and I'm Proud," which contained overt political commentary; and "Get Up (I Feel Like Being a Sex Machine)," which featured the debut of Maceo Parker, who later joined Parliament-Funkadelic, as part of Brown's backing band, the JBs.

As a rap artist, Francis said he listened hard to Brown because the beats in the latter's songs, often performed by a set of accom-

"HE was an inspiration," says FrancisM.

plished jazz and big band musicians, were openly acknowledged as the most "sampled" in hip hop. Among those tracks were "Funky Drummer," "Give It Up (Or Turnit A Loose)" and "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag, Pt. 1."

Two days after Brown's death on Christmas Day 2006, I spoke to Francis by phone and asked him to account what the man really meant to him. Not content with one conversation, he sent the following text message:

"James Brown's soul not only a music icon and legend. He was an inspiration to me. The Godfather of Soul was [truly] the hardest Working Man in the biz and I myself try to stay in that mind set. I work six days a week, 10 the wee hours. I do two to three gigs a week. 'Legacy' in local show biz and my own. I am in a gig in Cebu as on this day he died.

"Brown's influence is so great that I have written songs patterned after his own numbers, ei. 'Whatcha Me' (2002), 'Movin' Along (with 1 PWE)' and 'Old Skool' (1998). I have a lot of favorite JBs— 'Super Bad,' 'Gonna Have a Funky Good Time,' 'Papa's Got a Brand New Bag,' 'Sex Machine' and 'Try Me.'

"To underscore his influence and contribution not only in hip hop and R&B, but in pop music as a whole, I say for a start— James Brown is Soul Unique). So greatest Hyde. As was good on man, tape, but even better live. I saw James Brown (I) get his autograph before 'dirty' or Leonardo, if the three were to pitcher in a scene.

"Without James Brown, there would be no Stevieland Morris (a.k.a. Stevie Wonder), no Michael Jackson, no Prince, no MC Hammer, no Usher... the list goes on."

So I tackle, an undated footage of James Brown is on at You Tube. Shrieking, his hysterics footwork while singing "I Feel Good," I fully understood what FrancisM meant.

# ENTERTAINMENT

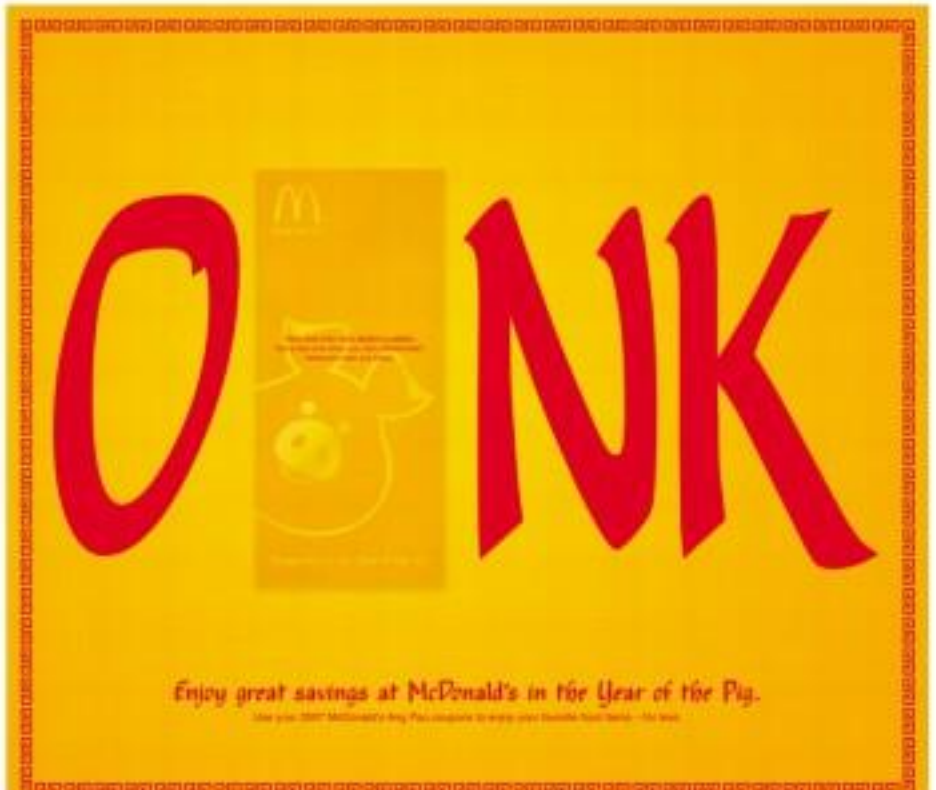
## FUN SNAPS FROM 2006

STILL INVOLVED. Of course we know the plans up in July was in promote the Robin Padilla-Regine Velasquez starrer, "Till I Met You" (released in November). But doesn't this look like the real thing?

# A Pinay star off Broadway

By Cara Gozo
Photos by Edwin Bacasmas

SHE MAY HAVE broken the hearts of those who have grown to love her song-and-dance numbers in that '90s reunion-oriented show, but Marie-Frances Noelle Arcilla had to move on to conquer a different audience.



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3 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 9
4 MANO PO 6
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
7 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
8 SUPER NOYPI
9 TATLONG BAWANG
10 LIGALIG

### ERMITA

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 LIGALIG
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
4 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 9
5 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
6 KABAL, KABALL KABALO
7 MANO PO 6

### METRO EAST

1 KABAL, KABALL KABALO
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
4 SUPER NOYPI
5 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
6 MANO PO 6
7 LIGALIG
8 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 9

### NOVALICHES

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 9
2 SUPER NOYPI
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
5 MANO PO 6
6 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
7 LIGALIG
8 KABAL, KABALL KABALO

### CITISQUARE MALABON

1 SUPER NOYPI
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

### PIONEER

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 9
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
4 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH


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2 MANO PO 6
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
4 KABAL, KABALL KABALO
5 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 9

### LIPA

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 9
3 SUPER NOYPI
4 KABAL, KABALL KABALO
5 MANO PO 6

### DASMARINAS

1 SUPER NOYPI
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 9
4 KABAL, KABALL KABALO
5 MANO PO 6

### ANGELES

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 MANO PO 6
3 KABAL, KABALL KABALO
4 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 9

### IMUS

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 9
2 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
5 LIGALIG
6 KABAL, KABALL KABALO

### STARMILLS

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 9
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 SUPER NOYPI
4 MANO PO 6
5 LIGALIG
6 KABAL, KABALL KABALO

### BACOLOD

1 MANO PO 5
2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 9
3 KABAL, KABALL KABALO
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
5 THE NATIVITY STORY
6 SUPER NOYPI

### ILOILO

1 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
2 KABAL, KABALL KABALO
3 MANO PO 6
4 SUPER NOYPI
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 9


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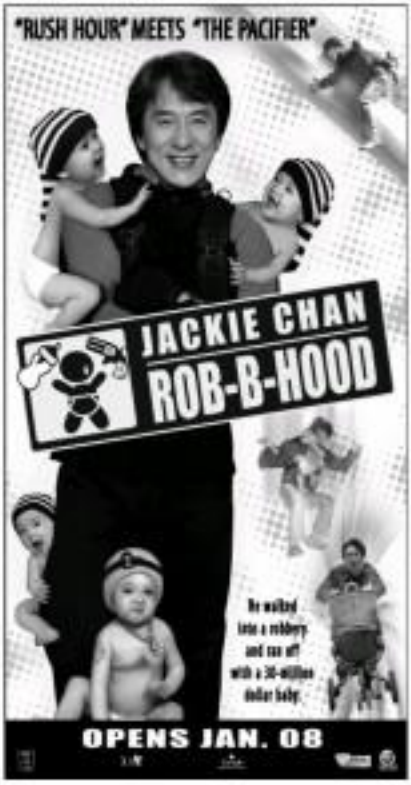


OPENS JANUARY 8

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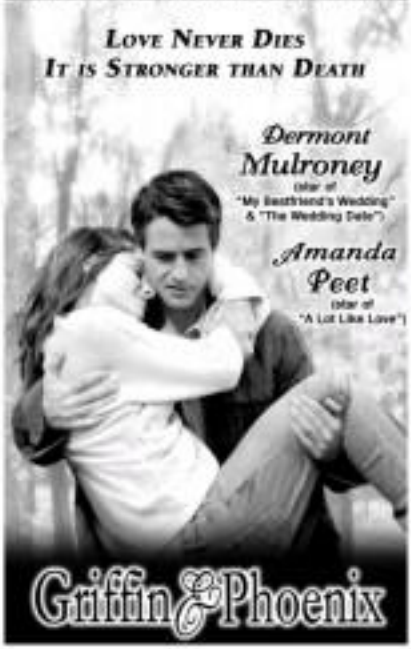



## ENTERTA

# A Pinay s
# off Broad

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### First breaks

### Tough tryouts

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Walter Mart
CINEMA
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Enteng Kabisote - 3
Shake, Rattle & Roll - 8
Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo
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SHE SINGS, dances and acts in "Shout! The Mod Musical," left (in blue costume).

MARIE-France Arcilla, home for the holidays.

# A Pinay star off Broadway

From page F1

(muse) at the auditions were on, until she had to have four producers, two writers, a director and a musical director on one audition.

She particularly remembers the audition for the off-Broadway musical "Shout! The Mod Musical" which, they unknown to her, was directed by her musical teacher Phillip George.

"There's nothing harder than auditioning for someone who taught me everything I know," she says. "In the middle of my song, he started laughing. It was such a bad sign. But it turned out he liked it. He was just laughing because he was proud of me. He cast me!"

Her off-Broadway performances include "Aida" (Ensemble), "Making Trades" (Estelle/Grace), "Company" (April), "Fame" (Carmen), "Shiow" (Sassy), "Once Upon and Ever After" (Cinderella/Fiona), "The Songbook Series: Things" (Maria), "The Bus" (Eunice), "The Whites Stuff" (Tracie) and "The Art" (Rachel).

Marie-France explains that off-Broadway plays or musicals, although staged in smaller theaters than Broadway productions, are not necessarily small shows. She says the rest from big shows like the 44 — a 24 or comedy take on the classic story of Heidi's ark — was off-Broadway.

"The Art" was staged in the 399-seat 27 Arts Theater, with a set that cost $650,000. It also had big names in the cast, like Annie Golden of the '70s movie musical "Tunt" and Allison Janney of the TV series "C.J. Cregg."

"A lot of shows on Broadway started off-Broadway," says Marie-France, noting the successful Broadway staging of "Rent," which was later adapted to the big screen. "My latest show 'Shout!,' has Broadway aspirations. We're waiting to hear what's going to happen.

"'Shout!' is a 1960s-inspired musical that follows five women as they sweat it out. Marie-France plays the woman identified only as Blue.

## Rave reviews

The musical that played for 182 regular performances at the Julie Miller Theater in New York got such rave reviews that a Broadway staging is believed to be in order.

Marie-France, who leaves three-week vacation/work, is now based in New York and lives alone in Little Italy, a neighborhood where, she says, Italy and Chinatown collide. "It's so ironic that Chinese people are crossing at my block to get to Chinatown. But worst, there's a guy pulling mozzarella by hand."

She has yet to do her dream role — that of the ugly Swan in the James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim musical "Passion." She also wants to conquer the local stage, after doing a few plays for Atlier's Artists Inc., Dowling III Yangdong Arenas, Koine Theater Foundation and Kinsfolk Productions.

When she's not on stage, Marie-France hosts "Cinema ATK," a weekly half-hour program broadcast on ATK Television, which is the network's answer to "E!" She's proud to have guested Filipino celebrities on the show, the actors Gene Montano and Ricky Davao and divorcee Marilou Diaz-Abaya.

She has recently hired an agent, which now keeps her busy literally going out and looking for the next job.

"It has made life a lot easier," she says. "I have a lot of shows in the works."

TIME OFF: Broadway star has Broadway aspirations.

Magic Sarap
MAGIC CASH RAFFLE
1 PACK LANG, NANALO NA SILA!
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WINNER OF ₱1,000,000.00
Sheila C. Sarmoya
No. 56-A Mc Arthur Hi-way, Matina, Davao City
WINNER OF ₱500,000.00
Rosita Abiera
WINNER OF ₱200,000.00
Alex Gervacio
WINNER OF ₱100,000.00
Julie Collera
Gaudencio S. Gramatica
Ms. Jessie E. Lanuzo
Mirla Rabang
Reynaldo P. Salvador
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Glenda R. Taboada
Grace Villacorte
Jose M. Villalin
WINNER OF ₱10,000.00
Rex Schmidtzell R. Agapay
Julianne G. Cubio
Remston P. Dela
Ma. Nelly E. Ibasan
Mary Ann R. Lozano
Gregorio Cortez
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Winners will be notified on more or less three days via registered mail and/or courier service.
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